THE CONSTANT LOVER;

OR,

WILLIAM AND JEANETTE:

A TALE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF A. VON KOTZEBUE.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

AN ACCOUNT OF THE LITERARY LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

THE CONSTANT LOVER;

OR,

WILLIAM AND JEANETTE:

A TALE.

CHAP. I.

THE PRISONERS.

Is the love of war a natural propenſity, like the love of dancing? Does the Supreme Being ſupply mankind with life and ſtrength merely for his amuſements, as the Engliſh feed their game-cocks?—

Or is war the child of hunger, like the ravage of the hawk? or does it ariſe from the craving appetite of the rulers of nations?

A great philoſopher, and therefore no friend of mine (ſince creatures who are guided only by categorical imperatives aſſimilate as ill with friendſhip as the cedars of Lebanon with a bean-ſtalk), maintains that this inſignificant planet, the exiſtence of which our neighbour Jupiter never once ſuſpects, was formed to be the ſcene of *war of all againſt all*. Good men are averſe to acknowledge ſuch cruel theories. Good men are more inclined to adopt the obſervation, that from the elephant down to the polypus the inſtinct of love awakes in the ſpring in every living creature, breathes life and ſenſibility into millions of beings, and when winter approaches again expires. If, however, the propenſity to kill reverſes this order; if it awakes in the

ſpring only to deſtroy, the buſineſs of the ſoldier is at variance with the courſe of nature. Love alone ſhould take the field, and the May-dew ſhould mingle with the tears of fondneſs to render every grain of powder uſeleſs which is deſtined to deſtroy the exiſtence of any being capable of the tender paſſion.

Such were the reflections which William indulged when, after the lapſe of a happy winter, he received the unwelcome order to hold himſelf in readineſs to march, to envelope the firſt genial rays of the ſun in clouds of ſmoke, and to tread the riſing ſeed deep in the boſom of the earth. For five months he had now experienced, that what the moſt ardent imagination conceives of the joys of firſt love falls infinitely ſhort of the inexhauſtible felicity of domeſtic content; that if the imagination of the enamoured youth lends him the fiery chariot of the prophet to ſoar into viſionary

heavens, ſober reality brings him down to earth and to humanity, but lays him on a bed of roſes. His intoxication was now gone; he enjoyed the flame, however, which formerly had been expoſed to every puff of wind, and threatened at laſt to conſume the rich fuel by which it was fed. Now, indeed, it reſembled the lamp which has been diſcovered at Portici; encloſed in the pure cryſtal lamp of marriage, it burnt with a mild and eternal light.

Large cities, in one reſpect, reſemble a retired cottage; you may live in them juſt as you pleaſe; nobody troubles himſelf how the happy recluſe ſpends his time. If you allow the great to enjoy their feaſts, their routs, and their card-parties undiſturbed, they will permit you, with a contemptuous ſmile at your ſingularity, to remain happy at home. William had fully availed himſelf of this permiſſion. A fond accompliſhed wife,

a proved

a proved friend, a simple yet plentiful table, a glass of good wine, and a superfluous guinea for a brother in distress —such were his pleasures; and he who requires more for the happiness of life is indeed to be pitied, were he even possessed of the wealth for which he sighs.

Wishes rarely abandon even the happiest breast. But William belonged to that class of the peculiar favourites of destiny, who feel no other wish but "that every thing may continue as it now is;" who wish to lose nothing of what they enjoy, and covet nothing more. The king had presented him with a small estate in the country. "God send the king peace!" would he often exclaim, "that I may retire from the army to enjoy what his bounty has bestowed, and what love will adorn." The country round it is delightful, and the neighbourhood inhabited by old proud nobility, who would not condescend to

visit new-raised merit. What transporting prospects! Love, friendship, a country life, and no company!

The roses on Jeanette's cheeks were now indeed a little faded, and the usual lustre of her eye was obscured; but the happy husband rejoiced at the symptoms, and anxiously longed for the pledge of faithful love. Ambition was asleep in his breast. Willingly would he have taken the laurel from his brow to deck the cradle of his son.

Never, therefore, was an order to march more unwelcome than that which William had received. Several days he concealed the disagreeable intelligence from his wife, now become doubly dear to him. The penetrating eye of love, however, soon discovered his anxiety; Jeanette had long trembled at the thought of a new separation; she endeavoured to arm herself with firmness, and speak to William that comfort which she herself

ſo much required. She concealed her tears, and wept only in the ſilence of night when William ſeemed to be aſleep at her ſide. If her ſobs waked him from his ſlumbers, ſhe imputed her agitation to an unpleaſant dream.

His tenderneſs would almoſt have induced him, at the opening of the campaign, to quit the ſervice; but Jeanette oppoſed this ſacrifice. "It ſhall not be ſcornfully ſaid of you that you loſt your warlike ardour in my arms; never ſhall it be ſaid that you have been ungrateful to your ſovereign. Go to the field—be courageous, but not fool-hardy; remember your duty, but remember too the helpleſs innocent whom yet you have not ſeen. When you return, he will bound to you with cries of fondneſs from my breaſt. When you have fulfilled the demands of duty, ungird your ſword, and let our boy play with your arms while you repoſe upon my boſom."

Thus did ſhe conceal her anxiety and her grief under a feigned heroiſm, while the moment of ſeparation was ſtill at ſome diſtance. When, however, the Sunday of the laſt week arrived, and William's regiment for the laſt time marched in proceſſion to church, her courage diſappeared, and ſhe trembled like a condemned criminal as ſhe tied William's belt over his ſhoulder. He went to church—and anxiety and devotion prompted her likewiſe to go thither. During the ſermon ſhe had frequently, unobſerved, wiped away the falling tear; but when the chaplain of the regiment began to offer up a ſolemn prayer for the ſucceſs of their arms, when he bleſſed the aſſembled warriors, and the tear dropped upon the whiſkers of the old grenadiers, ſhe hid her face in her muff, and prayed in ſpeechleſs grief.

With what warmth did her heart repeat the words of the preacher: "Permit

mit me, O God! to fee all thofe who are now before thee once more affembled in this place; let not one of them be miffing; and in thy temple let us hear the triumphant voice of gratitude, not the complaint of the widow, and the wailing of the orphan!"

She returned home quite exhaufted. Her courage had fled. In two days the regiment was to march. Every hour fhe heard the dreadful note of preparation under her window. Baggage and ftores were continually paffing through the ftreets, and the dull found of the cannon rattled along. Every thing was alive; every thing was in motion, while fhe lay weeping before a trunk packing up her hufband's linen. She had prepared bandages and lint in cafe he fhould be wounded, and twenty times informed his fervant where he would find every thing the moment it was wanted.

After this melancholy tafk was per-

formed, ſhe wandered diſconſolate from room to room, and fixed her ſorrowful eyes on the empty ſpot where William's camp bed had ſtood, now on the bare wall where William's piſtols were uſed to hang. When the morning of ſeparation arrived, and William had ſtolen early from her ſide to drown in buſtle and activity the agony of ſeparation, ſhe threw herſelf into a carriage, and drove on for half a mile to a cottage, where ſhe was to bid her huſband farewell.

A thick cloud of duſt announced the approach of the troops. One regiment after another marched paſt. Women and children preſſed with cries of ſorrow between the ranks; here a weeping grenadier led a little girl by the hand, while the pregnant mother walked ſobbing beſide them; here a luſty boy carried his father's muſket; here a rough, blunt ſoldier ſhook his aged mother's hand; there another embraced his wife, who clung

clung in tears round his neck. Young fellows, who had no attachments, laughed and made merry, waving their hats adorned with green leaves. Here and there pedlars and hucksters offered their wares to sell. Many drank to drown care, and tears trickled into the glass.

Jeanette saw nothing that passed. Her heart beat, her breath was irregular, her eyes were inflamed. She gazed with fixed attention towards the gate from which the troops still continued to pour. The well-known uniform of William's regiment now glanced in her view. William rode carelessly on at the head of his battalion. The once fiery steed paced along with sober steps. The reins had unperceived dropped upon the horse's neck. When William reached the cottage, he leaped from his horse, and Jeanette from the carriage. He flew to her pale as death, and she sunk down in his arms. He kneeled by her side, pressed

his cold lips to hers, which glowed with feverish heat, left the marks of his tears on her cheek, sprung hastily up, and mounted his steed. Jeanette lay insensible. When she recovered, the distant drum sounded in her ear. She rose, looked down the valley, and saw the last clouds of dust driving in the wind.

She quitted her attendants, retired into a neighbouring thicket, fell upon her knees, and prayed. Spare, ye sceptres! spare the sorrowful heart this comfort in affliction! which, if it does not heal the wound, protects it against the violence of external assaults. Happy the mortal who is confident in prayer! Tranquillity and hope are the rewards of his pious conviction. Early in the morning when she awoke, late in the evening when she retired to rest, Jeanette revived herself with this cordial balsam. It strengthened her in the heavy hour of her delivery, and banished every melancholy

choly preſage concerning her huſband's fate.

Alas! his regiment was but too ſoon engaged in a ſevere action between the advanced poſts. William fought by the ſide of his friend, and was ſurrounded. He ſaw his gallant comrades fall around him, and, overpowered by numbers, was at laſt obliged to yield. He and Frederick were taken priſoners. After being plundered by the enemy's huſſars, they were conducted to the camp. There, indeed, they were treated with reſpect, but cloſely watched; and in a few days they were ſent off, with a number of other priſoners, into the interior of France.

CHAP. II.

THE BRUNETTE.

WANT and ſorrow accompanied William in his captivity. One conſolation only was left him. He was not ſeparated from his friend, whoſe ear and heart were ever open to his ſighs, and who liſtened to the eternal monotony of his complaints with unwearied attention. Often had Frederick formerly laughed at him, as an enamoured enthuſiaſt, and teaſed him with his raillery, telling him that marriage was fain to keep itſelf warm by the embers which the flame of love left behind, and that even theſe it would often extinguiſh when they began to glow. Now, however, he acknowledged that Love did not always extinguiſh his torch when Hymen lighted his, ſince never had William doted on his

wife

wife with such fond affection. The flame of first desire, which the soft gales of undisturbed possession blow invisibly from heart to heart, was now awakened by the regret of separation. He thought only of Jeanette. He spoke only of her; no privations affected him, no object could engage his curiosity. Plundered and stript of the most urgent necessaries, he leapt for joy when in a corner of his pocket he found a small inkhorn and a silver pen, which had escaped the avarice of the hussars. He now daily wrote a letter, at every place where the escort stopped, when he could find even a stone by the road-side to serve as a table. When others ate or slept, his heart was awake. Grief, the pain of separation, the fondest consolation, the most glowing hopes of meeting he painted in his letters with the most ardent enthusiasm; and with what grateful rapture did

did he preſs to his breaſt the good-natured corporal, who promiſed to forward his firſt letter!

After a long and fatiguing journey, they at laſt arrived at the place of their deſtination, a little town in Guienne. Here they received permiſſion to go about at large on their parole of honour. They durſt not avail themſelves much of this indulgence, as the deluded people hated every foreigner, as the ſlave of deſpotiſm, and thought themſelves juſtified, with ſavage ferocity to ſeize the ſlighteſt pretext to inſult or even to murder men whom they conſidered as tools hired for their ſubjugation.

During the day, therefore, William and Frederick ſeldom left their ſorry habitation. Commonly they ſtole out in the twilight, ſtrolled through the blooming fields, ſtretched themſelves on the banks of the Garonne, or at noon ſought

the hospitable hut of some peasant, who entertained them with milk, honey, and fruit.

One evening they accidentally met with a German book; and as they had so long been deprived of the pleasure of reading, they congratulated themselves on the feast that awaited them next morning. The first rays of the sun found the two friends already in the fields. The unclouded sky and the dewy grass seemed to threaten a warm day, and they sought, therefore, at a little distance from the town, a shady thicket which lay on the brow of a hill. There they found a delightful retired spot, and stretched themselves under an olive-tree. William pulled the book out of his pocket, and Frederick lay carelessly on the grass.

They had not been here above two hours when a wild din from the neighbouring village struck their ears. They were alarmed, and hesitated whether they

they ſhould leave their retreat, or conceal themſelves deeper in the wood. The laſt might appear ſuſpicious; they remained, therefore, where they were, reſolved to return to the town as ſoon as the road ſhould be clear, for it paſſed directly by the village church, from the ſteeple of which proceeded the alarm which had rouſed their apprehenſion.

As they liſtened, and loſt themſelves in conjectures reſpecting the cauſe of the tumult, they ſuddenly heard a ruſtling in the thicket at a little diſtance. It ſeemed as if a flying roe ruſhed paſt them. It came nearer—again it ſeemed to recede—ſometimes on the right, ſometimes on the left—the irregular breathing of a perſon exhauſted with running appriſed them that ſome one was at hand. The two friends held in their breath, and anxiouſly looked towards the place from which the ſound ſeemed nearer and nearer to approach.

"Here

"Here you are!" exclaimed haſtily and in a feeble voice a brown girl, with flowing hair and diſordered dreſs, while with eager anxiety, and occaſionally looking behind, ſhe broke upon the aſtoniſhed ſtrangers.

"Fly! fly!" fluttered ſhe with a voice ſcarcely articulate, "they are coming, they are in purſuit of you. —You will be found here—and you are gone!"

"*How? Why? What is the matter?*"

The girl was exhauſted and could not anſwer, ſhe only pointed with her finger to the footpath; and when the ſtrangers ſtill heſitated, ſhe ran before them, pointed and folded her hands in the attitude of entreaty. William and Frederick at laſt followed her, without knowing why or whither. Their ſwift conductor ſoon brought them to a fiſherman's empty hut. Here ſhe ſank down on the graſs, and exclaimed: "I can do no more!"

Her full boſom heaved with violent agitation ; ſhe blood forſook her cheeks. Yet now and then ſhe ſtruggled to hold in her breath, turned towards the village to liſten, and again panted more violently. The two friends ſtood before her, and knew not what to think of this extraordinary incident. They gave her time to recover herſelf. Frederick lighted upon a wooden diſh in the hut, which he filled with water and gave her. She drank a few drops, and bathed her cheeks, to cool the glowing heat. When at laſt ſhe recovered the uſe of her tongue, ſhe told them, in broken incoherent ſentences :

" Some ill-inclined perſons have laſt night cut down the tree of liberty in our village. The whole village is in an uproar. The young men have taken arms, and are in ſearch of the perpetrators, and if taken they will be put to death.— You have been obſerved, for ſome weeks

paſt, to ſkulk about in this neighbourhood; it is ſuſpected that you are the culprits."

"We!" exclaimed the two friends in amazement.

"I believe you are not," proceeded the girl, "you appear to be men of honour; and even were you guilty, I could ſee nobody murdered. My Philip, too, is in the mob; he has his ſword, and ſwears to put you to death. I tremble yet to think of his dreadful oaths—and if he ſheds blood I can no more love him. This morning, very early, as I was feeding my pigeons, I ſaw you paſs by the village, and ſtroll into this thicket; the cow-herd likewiſe ſaw you, and gave the information. Now they are about to ſurround this grove, and will not reſt till you are found. Here have I run to ſave innocent blood, and implored my guardian angels that with their help I might fortunately meet you, and they

have graciously heard my prayer!—Haste! endeavour to gain the town by a circuitous way, for here you are not safe. I would accompany you with all my heart, but I can go no farther!

"If you follow this footpath, it will carry you into the road to Montauban; then leave our village on your left hand, and after making a circuit of a few miles you may in the twilight return to town."

"But we are innocent," said William.

"We have never even seen your tree of liberty," pursued Frederick.

"That will avail you nothing," returned the girl hastily. "You will be murdered—you are strangers—you are not French citizens (this she said with some degree of solemnity). Nobody will demand satisfaction for your lives. Fly! fly! Heard you not the voices in the thicket?—In a few minutes it will be too late!"

William and Frederick ſoon perceived that, in ſpite of their innocence, their lives were in danger, and that they had not a moment to loſe. They thanked their generous deliverer, and flew down the pathway which ſhe had pointed out. It ſoon brought them into an unknown road, where they ſtopped a little to take breath, and to confirm the obſervation which has ſo long been made by travellers in every part of the world, that women are every where more courteous, more gentle, more benevolent, and more humane towards ſtrangers than men.

CHAP. III.

THE COFFIN.

As they had now left the dreaded village a good way behind, the fugitives considered themselves safe, rested a few minutes, and then slowly pursued their way, blessing the generous girl who, notwithstanding her pride in the title of a French citizen, had so kindly apprised them of their danger. They soon perceived, however, that the enthusiastic spirit, like a raging lioness, had thrown the whole country round into alarm and apprehension by its wild roar. They found, that in our times the cutting down of a tree of liberty can excite the same fury, which two hundred years ago the destruction of a cross, or two thousand years ago the violation of a sacred oak, would have occasioned.

When Alcibiades demolished the statue of Mercury, the Athenians raged just like the new men of France about their tree of Liberty. On the right and on the left, before and behind the fugitives, the sullen sound of bells was heard in all the villages. They redoubled their speed. The road led to a hill, which they endeavoured to reach; but, alas! under the brow of the hill lay a village, from which the confused noise of shouts and the rattling of arms proceeded. Hastily they wheeled round, ran rapidly down the hill, directly back again, and perceived, at a distance, a cloud of dust, which warned them that their pursuers were at hand.

They now flew over hedges and ditches across the fields; sometimes they thought of concealing themselves in the standing corn; sometimes they thought of hiding themselves in a farmer's hayloft; but a loud-mouthed cur or a bawl-

ing infant frightened them away. They now knew not whither they went, ran through brooks and moraffes, without reflection. They heard the alarm all around, and at laft they arrived, without fufpecting it, at the road they had left.

The danger every moment increafed. The fields round were covered with their purfuers; before and behind, clouds of duft rolled; the bells rang from every fteeple, and the fhouts of men and the barking of dogs broke on them from every quarter.

"I can go no farther!" faid William. "Heaven protect my wife and child! Here will I die!"

He funk down under a tree. Frederick fummoned up all his ftrength, climbed the tree, and viewed the country round.

"I fee a country-houfe," faid he, "not two thoufand paces diftant. Belong to whom it may, the owner will

furely

furely protect us at leaft from the fury of the mob. If he is a man of honour, he will deliver us into the hands of the civil power, but not permit us—even fhould he confider us guilty—to be murdered like wild beafts by a frantic rabble."

He came down. William rofe, and they exerted every effort to gain the country-houfe. In a romantic valley, through which a branch of the Garonne rolled meandering, lay a folitary habitation, fhaded by lofty elms, on the north fide bounded by a thick grove, which ftretched down to the banks of the river. The fugitives arrived, without interruption, at the iron gate that bounded the front lawn, which was taftefully ornamented with flower-beds. They found the doors fhut and barred. William boldly took a ftone, and knocked loud at the iron wicket. The grove re-echoed the found, but no dog barked, no living creature ftirred. They called.

Nobody anſwered. The houſe appeared to be empty. A number of broken windows confirmed the ſuppoſition. The railing was too high for them to climb over, and too ſtrong for them to break. The moments were precious. William and Frederick haſtened to the other ſide of the grove, there to look for a place where they might wait the ſhades of night.

The grove was likewiſe ſurrounded by a pretty high wall, but time had here and there looſened the ſtones; and fear lent them wings, for the voices of their purſuers already reſounded through the valley. A gloomy thicket of tall pines received them in its ſhade. Here they liſtened a few moments; and as the whole grove ſeemed to be inhabited by the feathered creation, as the linnets and bullfinches hopped as fearleſsly about them as if they had never ſeen a human form, they ventured to penetrate deeper into its receſſes.

They ſoon perceived that a little walk, in the ſtyle of the Engliſh gardens, ſkirted round the whole of the grove; but the graſs that grew thick through the gravel, which was here and there broken up by the rain, and not repaired, ſeemed to prove that it was long ſince it had been trod by human foot. Courageouſly the two friends advanced, intending, if poſſible, to take poſſeſſion of ſome empty corner of the houſe; when Frederick ſuddenly ſtopped, as William pulled him by the coat and pointed, with a mixture of fear and ſurpriſe, to the mark of a lady's foot in a mole-hill.

It was now plain that this muſt have happened yeſterday or the day before, conſequently the houſe with the broken windows was not altogether uninhabited, and the fugitives remained irreſolute in new embarraſſment and apprehenſion. In ſpite of their dangerous ſituation (for the voice of their purſuers

ſtill ſounded more terrible in the valley) their feelings, on perceiving the prints of the foot were very different from thoſe which Robinſon Cruſoe had experienced on a ſimilar occaſion. They could not ceaſe to contemplate with pleaſure the mark, which was that of an elegant foot; and William thought, that if it was poſſible that Jeanette could be here, it muſt have been made by hers. For a moment fear gave place to ſofter emotions. So feels the traveller, who, ſurrounded by the murky ſhades of night, ſuddenly deſcries at a diſtance a friendly light.

What a powerful effect does an inch more or leſs produce upon the ſenſes of men, through them on the imagination, and ſo on upon the underſtanding! Had the mark covered the whole of the mole-hill, the idea of beauty, and with it of harmleſs goodneſs, would not have aſſociated with the feelings of our fugitives. Perhaps, alarmed at the appear-

ance, they might have again made their retreat over the walls. A creature, however, that had ſuch elegant feet, ſeemed ſo little calculated to inſpire terror, that they were inclined to wiſh rather than to avoid a meeting.

With more caution and circumſpection they now purſued the winding way, which appeared to lead to the banks of the river. The murmuring of the ſtream ſoon convinced them that they were right; and after deſcending the footpath, winding through a thick ſhrubbery, down a gentle declivity, they commanded a proſpect of the water. They obſerved a little iſland, on which was built, with ſingular art and taſte, a grotto, ſurrounded with weeping willows, which bended their branches to the ſtream. A little draw-bridge led to the iſland. This ſecret receſs appeared a ſecure aſylum, and they redoubled their ſteps to reach the bridge. Silently they

paſſed over, and drew it up behind them. Silently, and with ſome anxiety, they approached the avenue to the grotto. Frederick was a few ſteps before, as William was detained fixing the bridge. When William had finiſhed, and was running up to overtake him, he ſaw his friend ſuddenly turn round, his face pale, and his knees trembling. He laid his finger on his mouth, waved his hand, and by his geſtures ſignified that William ſhould approach without noiſe.

William obeyed, and threw a fearful glance towards the grotto, which was lighted by a window in the roof. Two coffins lay cloſe together, covered with black, and without any ornament. Upon one of the coffins lay a female figure, in profound grief, her back towards them, and her head leaning upon her hand. She ſeemed to be aſleep, or to be loſt in grief—they did not hear her breathe.

Dreadfully ſhocked at this ſpectacle, the two friends ſtood motionleſs, and converſed only by doubtful looks. They waited long to ſee whether this ſolemn figure would turn round. As not the leaſt movement betrayed the appearance of life, and they ſaw a beetle crawling on her white neck, without attracting her attention, Frederick began to think that ſhe muſt be in a ſwoon, and ventured to advance a few ſteps nearer. His foot trod upon ſome dry leaves: they ruſtled—the figure roſe up. Heavens! what a creature! with every quality of an angel but fearleſſneſs!

Fair as a lily, with long flowing black hair, an eye mild as the evening ſtar ſurrounded with light clouds, her boſom negligently covered, whoſe dazzling whiteneſs was heightened by the contraſt of her black robe, a tall elegant form, a hand which ſeemed formed to wipe away the tears of love, a foot which

the fugitives eaſily recogniſed to be that which had left the mark in the grove—Such did the lovely ſtranger ſtand before them, in the firſt bloom of her charms. Had not her full boſom anxiouſly heaved—had not her white hand trembled, they would have dropped on their knees before her, as a ſuperior being. Frederick ſtood ſpeechleſs, with his eyes riveted to this celeſtial figure.. William endeavoured to ſpeak, but it was only in broken ſentences. The ſtranger firſt broke ſilence.

"Who are you?—What do you want?—Why have you intruded upon this ſanctuary of my grief?—Would you rob me even of theſe dear remains?"

At theſe words ſhe haſtily threw the lid from one of the coffins, and diſcovered the corpſe of an old man, whoſe head was ſevered from his body. This ſhocking ſpectacle occaſioned a long pauſe, during which the young lady gazed

at the corpſe with folded hands, and ſhed a tender tear. Frederick was unable to ſpeak, nor did he attempt to reply. William collected himſelf as well as he could, and in ſoothing accents began to relate the accident which had brought them here. He begged for an aſylum for a few hours, till they could elude their purſuers. The uproar, which every moment grew louder and louder, teſtified the truth of his ſtory.

As William ſpoke, the young lady's attention was involuntarily fixed by his figure and diſcourſe. When he had finiſhed, her looks fluctuated doubtfully between him and his companion. She had not made any anſwer, when a wild mob was heard thundering at the iron gate, and another round the walls of the grove.

" What can I do to aſſiſt you ?" ſaid ſhe : " Where can I conceal you ?—

Every corner of the grove is well known to thefe monfters. From its moft fecret receffes they dragged my aged father, and cruelly murdered him!" She burft into tears, and feemed anew to be quite engroffed with her grief, till a noife at the gate louder than before announced that the mob had burft it open.

"They come!" faid William. Frederick did not feem to hear them. "They come!" repeated the lady with anxiety. "It is too late to take you to the defolate manfion—there you would be—but no—it is too late. Fly! fly! I cannot fee you murdered!"

The frantic rabble now rufhed through the garden in crowds. Nothing remained for the fugitives but to plunge into the river; but it was deep, and neither of them could fwim. "Ha!" exclaimed William, "for what an inglorious death has fate referved me!"—

Frederick

Frederick ſaid nothing. He gazed at the young lady, and ſeemed to be utterly inſenſible.

The young mourner walked up and down, wringing her hands. She looked compaſſionately at the ſtrangers, and appeared to ſtruggle with a thought which ſhe ſometimes reluctantly diſmiſſed, and again benevolently cheriſhed. William ſaw what paſſed in her ſoul. He threw himſelf at her feet: "If this angel form can give the leaſt pledge of humanity, ſave an unfortunate being, who has left in his own land other helpleſs creatures dependent on him!"

"Humanity!" repeated the lady, "Alas! that was denied to me!"

Suddenly the whole grove reſounded with the voices of men, and on all ſides the ſhouts of frenzy were heard. It ruſhed like a whirlwind through the trees, and the frightened birds forſook their neſts. The mob had already diſ-

covered

covered the path which led to the grotto; numbers had reached the bridge, and began to cut down with their ſcythes the pulleys by which it was drawn up. A glow overſpread the young lady's cheeks; the mild luſtre of her eye kindled into fire. She threw herſelf on the coffin. Anxiety lent her ſtrength; ſhe lifted out the dead body, and laid it on the moſſy bank.

"Stranger! conceal yourſelf here," ſaid ſhe, pointing to the coffin. William ſprang into it, and in a moment the lid was replaced. She now opened the ſecond coffin. It was empty. She made a ſign to Frederick, which ſhe was thrice obliged to repeat before he underſtood. At laſt he threw himſelf into the coffin, but with an air which ſeemed to ſhow that he only obeyed her commands. She ſhut the lid upon him, and at this moment the ſteps of their purſuers thundered over the bridge.

The

The young lady threw herſelf down between the two coffins, with an arm extended over each, and in this poſture ſhe awaited the arrival of the mob. They came.—Men armed with ſcythes, ſickles, ſwords and muſkets, ſurrounded the entry into the grotto; but ſuddenly the foremoſt ſtood ſtill, as if thunderſtruck, and kept back thoſe behind, who, with gaping mouths, gazed over their ſhoulders.

"What do you want?" ſaid the lady to them with firm voice. "Is it not enough that you have murdered my father? Would you alſo deprive me of a burdenſome exiſtence?—If ſo, you are welcome!—Come in! come in!—Dye your arms in the blood of an innocent orphan!—Murder me on the corpſe of my father!"

The peaſants looked at one another doubtfully. The contraſt between the beauty of the lady and the bloody corpſe,

together with their diſappointed expecta-tions, made a powerful impreſſion on the rough ſons of nature. The wild cla-mour was ſucceeded by a death-like ſilence. "Come, friends!" at laſt ſaid one of them, "they are not here!"

"You may be perfectly eaſy, miſs," ſaid another, "tell us only where the villains have fled."

"Whom do you mean?" purſued the lady. "Since that old man fell under your weapons, no human foot has en-tered this ſolitude. If you mean to in-ſult—if you mean to delight yourſelves with the ſight of a murdered man, come nearer! See how placidly he ſmiles; he has forgiven his murderers. Come in, and touch thoſe cold hands, of whoſe bleſſing you have deprived me!"

At theſe words ſhe ſeized the hand of the corpſe, and held it out to them. The peaſants were ſhocked, and ſtarted back. The hindermoſt diſappeared; the crowd

diſperſed,

dispersed, and the last went away with fearful looks. "They are not here!" cried they as they crossed the bridge. "They are not here!" they sounded through the grove. The noise gradually subsided, and before a quarter of an hour elapsed, the birds had again taken possession of their nests, and a gloomy silence of the solitude.

CHAP. IV.

THE CAVERN.

SHOULD any of my ſarcaſtic readers be inclined to laugh at the circumſtance of a young beautiful lady, in the height of grief, taking the mutilated corpſe of her father out of the coffin, in order to put a handſome young man into it, let them recollect the widow of Epheſus, who, from much more queſtionable motives, hung the body of her departed huſband upon the gallows.

BABET—for it is now time to diſcover the name of this lovely guardian angel—Babet was the daughter of a nobleman, who had the misfortune to be rich, and to be a man of worth and honour. Of courſe he was obnoxious to the party now in power. They reſolved to get rid of him in the uſual manner; that is to ſay,

ſay, they denounced him as an ariſtocrat; he became a marked man; and the peo-ple, ever ready for ſuch deeds, under-took the execution of the ſentence. Two of his ſons were murdered. The third fled, as was ſaid, to America, there to weep in company with young La Fayette.

The old man himſelf choſe the moſt retired of all his eſtates, and thought to eſcape perſecution by a voluntary ſeclu-ſion. In vain, however!—Party fury traced him to this harmleſs retreat, tore him from the arms of his only daughter, and hurried him to the ſcaffold.

Babet, in the ſixteenth year of her age, had been educated in a cloiſter; and when the deſtroying angel, called *Liberty*, burſt thoſe holy cells, ſhe re-turned to the boſom of her family. While ſhe lived immured within the walls of the cloiſter, except the old blind gar-dener, ſhe had never ſeen the face of

man;

man; and, except a favourite cat, had never loved any thing. When ſhe became acquainted with her worthy father, and her ſprightly brothers, ſhe loved them with her whole ſoul, and their ſentiments and modes of thinking became hers; for women rarely chooſe their own opinions, they are formed by the company in which they live. They commonly love with great conſtancy; but if they ever change their attachments, they likewiſe change their principles.

Babet was a decided royaliſt. The death of her father and brothers at firſt made her quite delirious; and ſtill nouriſhed by the ſolitude in which ſhe lived, and the dreadful objects to which ſhe was habituated, her grief bordered upon lunacy. She converſed only with the corpſe of her father, ſhe ſlept on the moſs bank in the grotto, ate only the fruits which the trees accidentally preſented; never went beyond the limits

of

of the gloomy grove, was deserted by the officious servants of her former prosperity, and even dismissed the few who offered to share her danger and her poverty.

Her inflamed imagination had inspired her with a superstitious idea, which she neither could nor wished to drive from her mind. Having dreamed that on the anniversary of her father's birthday, which was to happen in a few weeks, she would be united to her father and brothers by a stroke of lightning, she was firmly convinced that the dream would be realised; for which reason she had prepared an empty coffin to receive her. This firm belief rendered her indifferent to what passed around her. She smiled when any attempt was made to amuse her, and wistfully shook her head when she was advised to collect the remains of her estates in different provinces, which were left a prey to rapine.

In this temper of mind the two friends found her; and on feeing them, nature, for the firft time, refumed her rights, and bound her to life with new and tender ties. A young lady, who, till now, feemed to be abandoned by God and the world, who had no relation, no friend to whom fhe could fly; a young, helplefs, infulated creature, could not but feel herfelf in a new element when fhe faw herfelf the deliverer of two handfome, generous young men. When Babet opened the coffin, fhe felt fomething as if fhe faw her brother rife from it. She was no longer without fupport. She had purchafed at the rifk of her life, perhaps of her honour, two grateful protectors.

The young men lay at her feet, preffed their glowing lips to her hand, and uttered foothing words of gratitude. A new and delightful feeling diffufed itfelf through that breaft, which, till now, had

had heaved only with ſighs. She looked down upon the creatures with complacency; ſhe wiſhed to complete the work of their deliverance; ſhe forgot her father's corpſe, and ſhe even forgot to reproach herſelf for her negligence.

"Follow me!" ſaid ſhe. "Your perſecutors and mine might repent their having been ſurpriſed and overcome by a feeling of humanity; they might ſuddenly return. Follow me into the manſion, which they have diſmantled. I will conduct you to a cavern, which, for many weeks, ſerved my father as a ſecure retreat. Alas! he would have lived ſtill had he not left it!"

Babet went out of the grotto. Frederick and William followed her; the former like a perſon intoxicated; the latter had recovered the perfect exerciſe of his faculties. With politeneſs and tender concern he converſed with their fair guide as ſhe haſtily walked on before them,

them, and he contrived to introduce ſo many refined and elegant compliments on her beauty and beneficence, that Babet, by degrees, was brought down from her converſe with ſpirits to an intercourſe with kindred mortals. She poſſeſſed ſo much conſideration, as to avoid every open and expoſed place of the garden, and to ſteal along between high hedges till ſhe brought her gueſts ſafe through many a winding alley to the back-door of the deſolate habitation.

Here they mounted a winding ſtaircaſe, paſſed through a ſmall antichamber, and went into the kitchen; where an old footman and a young ſervant girl lay trembling on their knees, imploring all the ſaints in the calendar for help. When the frantic mob broke into the garden, they thought that the rabble had come to deſtroy the laſt frail ſhoot of the old ſtem, and gave up their miſtreſs for loſt. When they heard footſteps on the

the ſtair, they imagined that their own hour was come, and were pronouncing their laſt prayer. At the ſight of Babet their terrors were changed into the wildeſt tranſports. They ſprang up, leaped and ſung around her, and it was a long time before ſhe could make the footman underſtand that ſhe wanted the key of the ſubterraneous cavern. He then ran to find it, ſought it over the whole houſe from the garret to the cellar, and at laſt found it in his own pocket.

Babet now conducted the ſtrangers into her father's cloſet. Here ſhe took a lighted lamp, opened a concealed door in the tapeſtry, and deſcended a narrow ſtair-caſe, which, through many windings, terminated in a ſpacious vault. She ſought and found an iron crow, which accident ſeemed to have left in a corner. She gave it to William, and deſired him, as ſhe pointed out the place in the wall, to remove the ſtones, which were but

newly built up, and were but weakly faſtened.

He did as he was deſired. An iron door appeared, ſo ſmall that a perſon could hardly puſh through. Babet touched a concealed ſpring. The door flew open, and they entered a ſpacious cavern, which was furniſhed only with a few neceſſary articles of furniture, a ſtraw bed, and a mattreſs.

"Here you may remain quiet and eaſy till night-fall. Meanwhile I will diſpatch a perſon to reconnoitre the road, and to bring intelligence. When all is ſafe, I myſelf will return and liberate you from this confinement. My ſervant, in the mean time, ſhall bring you bread and fruit for your refreſhment. Except ſuch ſcanty fare I have nothing to offer. The plunderers have robbed me of every thing. Meanwhile, replace the ſtone in the wall, and ſhut the iron door; you may then ſleep in peace till I awake you."

She

She difappeared A few minutes after old Antony brought a light and a bafket of fruit. The two friends were then left alone. Frederick threw himfelf on the ftraw-bed, and hid his face; while William employed himfelf, in filence, in rebuilding the ftones which formed the falfe wall that concealed the fecret door.

CHAP. V.

THE TREASURE.

WHEN Cupid ſteals from his mother a handful of flax to make a love-net, the moment which the cunning rogue chooſes to ſpread the flax on the enchanted ſpindle will decide the fortune of the enterpriſe, ſince on the firſt twiſt and pull it will depend whether the thread will ultimately be rough or ſmooth, coarſe or fine.

To ſpeak without metaphor, it is of the utmoſt importance for a lady who wiſhes to captivate a man ſhe has never ſeen before to chooſe a ſituation, and to improve it with addreſs, in which ſhe can diſplay all her female charms in the moſt ſeducing light. The obſervation is applicable both to the charms of body and of mind. Take a ſtranger into the

habitation

habitation of a divinity at the moment when she gives her waiting-maid a box on the ear—carry him then to the hut of a gentle creature, who, if you please, is deformed with freckles and the marks of the small-pox, he finds her employed in feeding a poor old man, or clothing a naked orphan—rely upon it the mortal will triumph over the divinity.

After this common-place remark, (for, alas! there is nothing new to be said under the sun, and Kant's great discoveries, when closely considered, turn out nothing but new words;) the reader will think it very natural that Frederick's heart, in which no damsel had yet been able to kindle a spark, suddenly burst out into a flame.

Consider only how many things combined to heighten the force of Babet's charms. The agitation of mind in which Frederick arrived before the entry to the grotto, and in which Babet appeared to

him like a ſtar in a gloomy night, when perhaps in a more calm temper ſhe might have ſeemed to his impartial glance like a taper at noon-day—beſides the grief in which ſhe was plunged, her helpleſſneſs, which, with youth and beauty, makes a moſt powerful impreſſion; and laſt of all, the magnanimity with which ſhe had expoſed herſelf to ſave the life of two ſtrangers—the romantic expedient ſhe employed, which, in a critical moment, could have occurred to none but a woman—truly! though her eye had not been half ſo brilliant, though her boſom had not been half ſo round and white, though the print of her foot in the mole-hill had been as large again, Frederick, who was not, like his friend, protected by the ægis of honourable love, would not have failed to be as deeply wounded as he was.

He now lay upon the ſtraw-bed, and ſhut his eyes to avoid the inquiſitive

looks of his companion. It was not that he wished to conceal any thing from the friend of his heart, but that he himself yet knew not what was the matter with him, or what exactly he had to communicate. That something extraordinary had befallen him he indeed was well aware; but he felt like a blind man, who, being couched for the cataract, does not venture to open his eyes, and spends some time in voluntary darkness.

William stood before him, and looked at the sick man with a gentle smile diffused over his countenance. At last he broke the mysterious silence with these words:

"The adventure seems to have greatly affected you?"

Frederick.—Very much.

William. – You like the young lady?

Frederick (with a serious smile).— Like her?

William.—As you never liked before?

Frederick.—Never.

William.—Why do you ſhut your eyes?

Frederick.—Becauſe ſhe is gone.

William (after a pauſe).—I am afraid you are in love.

Frederick (turning aſide).—Good William, be kind enough to leave me at preſent to my reflections.

William, who knew well that there are moments when a man would rather chooſe to be whipped than to be teaſed with queſtions—for the blows you may bear with ſtoical fortitude, but the queſtions you are compelled to anſwer—politely withdrew, and began to think of ſome amuſement from the perſecution of ſome ſpiders, which in a vault generally find a moſt ſecure abode. He walked backwards and forwards, whiſtled, ſang, examined the furniture, and ſur-

veyed the inhabitants, which consisted of toads and beetles.

At last, having found a rusty nail, idleness suggested to him the amusement so natural in inns and prisons, of scrawling his name on the wall. For this purpose he took a view of the wall, and pitched upon the largest square stone, which was distinguished from the rest by some degree of colouring mingled with its grey hue. He took a chair to stand upon, which seemed to have been manufactured in the time of Henry IV. and with the lamp, now quite superfluous to his dreaming companion, in his left hand, the rusty nail in the right, he mounted up to immortalize his name in this subterraneous retreat.

But what was his astonishment when he held up the lamp and saw an inscription engraved upon the stone? It was clear that it had been formerly employed for the purpose he had intended, a cir-

cumſtance which had made it whiter and more conſpicuous than any of the reſt. The characters were feeble, and in ſome places ſcarcely legible. With conſiderable exertion, however, William made out the following:

"*Deareſt Babet! If thy innocence at laſt can find no aſylum but this; if you are robbed of all, you will find, under this ſtraw-bed, a proof that, even in his moſt dreary hours, thy father ſtill remembered and cared for thee.*"

William inſtantly communicated the diſcovery to Frederick, but Frederick ſeemed to treat it with indifference.—"What, don't you hear?" ſaid William. "Riſe, probably beneath that ſtraw a treaſure lies concealed."

"What is the treaſure to us?" ſaid Frederick, and never ſtirred.

"But it belongs to our guardian angel—to our generous deliverer!"

Scarce had William finiſhed this remonſtrance,

monſtrance, when Frederick was on his feet, carefully turning over the ſtraw. They found a place where the earth ſeemed looſe. They employed the nail to dig it up, and in a few minutes they pulled out a caſket, which was filled with articles of value. Tranſported at this accident, which enabled them to teſtify their gratitude to their generous hoſteſs, they expected the coming night with redoubled impatience. Almoſt as much as in the diſcovery of the jewels ſeemed Frederick to rejoice in the diſcovery of the name of Babet; for he did nothing but repeat this harmonious name, ſometimes aloud, ſometimes quite low, in tender and melting tones.

CHAP. VI.

THE VISIONARY.

ABOUT midnight, gliding ſoftly, like a benignant ſpirit, the lovely form of their protectreſs approached. A gentle touch preſſed the ſpring, the iron door flew open, and Babet entered.—" You are not yet ſafe," ſaid ſhe; " the neighbourhood ſwarms with drunken bloodthirſty murderers. You muſt remain here till to-morrow night, when, in all probability, tired of the tedious fruitleſs ſearch, the peaſants ſhall have returned to their occupations. In the mean time, indeed, you will be expoſed to want and inconvenience, for I have nothing with which to entertain you. Scarcity, with good welcome, is your only cheer." At

thefe words fhe laid on the table a few eggs, and a piece of black bread.

"Two hens," faid fhe with a melancholy fmile—"two hens are, God knows, all that has efcaped the general ravage and plunder. Alas! formerly our court-yard fwarmed with poultry, for I delighted to feed them.—Now I have nothing to feed my favourite hens, but they are ftill alive, and I could not have the heart to kill them.—You muft be content with the eggs.—I am almoft forry to rob them of thefe."

"How fortunate is my friend," faid William, with a generous facrifice of his own accidental merit—"how fortunate is my friend, that he can repay this benevolent kindnefs! While I was afleep he found a treafure which will place you, fair Babet, in a more comfortable fituation than that in which you now live."

Frederick ftood befide him, and prefented the cafket. Babet looked with doubtful

doubtful aſtoniſhment, now at her gueſts, now at the well-known caſket, the appearance of which in the hands of ſtrangers, as well as the mention of her name, ſeemed equally unaccountable. William took hold of the lamp, led Babet to the ſtone, mounted on the chair, and read her father's teſtament.

Scarcely had the tender girl recogniſed the traces of that honoured hand, no ſooner had ſhe heard the words "deareſt Babet," than ſhe dropped upon her knees, burſt into tears, and raiſed her hands to the ſacred ſtone. She received the caſket as a relick, and preſſed it with reſpect to her lips. "Honoured father," cried ſhe, "thou knoweſt that I no longer ſtand in need of this proviſion!"

She now turned round to the two friends: "You have made ſtrong profeſſions of your gratitude. If indeed I have any claim to your thanks, it is in your power to diſcharge the obligation."

"Speak!"

"Speak!" ſaid William, while his friend's eyes ſparkled with eagerneſs; and it was eaſy to read in them that he hoped it would at leaſt demand the hazard of his life.

"You will ſoon return to your native country," continued Babet, "and there it is my requeſt that you would endeavour to obtain intelligence of the Chevalier Belloy. He fled to America—perhaps he is ſtill alive!"—She ſaid this with ſuch warmth of feeling, her eye ſeemed to glance to heaven ſo ardent a prayer for the life of the Chevalier, that Frederick was greatly agitated. But he was ſoon relieved from his anxiety when the lovely creature proceeded: "He is my brother—now my only brother!—To him belong theſe jewels; they may enable him perhaps again to re-eſtabliſh the ſplendour of his houſe—for him I commit them to your care. Leave no means untried

untried to diſcover the place of his abode—promiſe me this—ſwear it!"

She held out her hand to them at once, to receive their oaths. William preſſed it with firmneſs, but his friend was deprived of his conſciouſneſs when her fingers touched him. He trembled and heſitated. Had Babet been vain or ſuſpicious, ſhe would have known him to be a lover, or ſuſpected him to be a knave.—She continued with compoſure:

"If all your pains and enquiries are in vain, if my Philip has likewiſe gone before me, I bequeath this caſket to you. Share its contents, be beneficent, and remember me!"

When William obſerved that ſhe was ſilent, and fixed her tearful eyes upon the ground, he took the liberty to repreſent to her that ſhe was ſtill very young, and ſtood more in need of a pro-

viſion

viſion than a brother, who could every where obtain a ſubſiſtence in foreign military ſervice. He entreated her to think of the deſolation that now prevailed in the abode of her anceſtors, he reminded her of the complaint of want which, but a few moments before, ſhe had mentioned, and adviſed her to fly from a country where a villain might remain unpuniſhed, but no nobleman could live in ſafety. "Such a flight," added he, "is difficult, and without money almoſt impoſſible."

Babet had liſtened to him with ſilence; and with a ſorrowful ſmile, "Yes," ſaid ſhe with a look of wild enthuſiaſm, "I will fly!—not fly—but depart in triumph—and that is poſſible—it is quite eaſy, without money.—You do not know," proceeded ſhe with a ſecret horror, while her eye ſparkled benignantly, "you know not, that in ten days I ſhall be with

with my father !" She looked to heaven with reverential awe and devotion.

William asked her if she was ill, that she felt herself so near death ?

" O no !" replied she, " God deals very graciously with me; he takes me out of this world without sickness." (She continued in a low and solemn voice) " In ten days, towards evening, a violent storm will take place; the wicked men around shall tremble, but I shall rejoice. —Then will the lightning strike upon the turret which stands there by the water-side. I shall stand under the turret, and stretch out my hands. Then shall the angel of God descend from a cloud, and transport me to the eternal throne; there shall I again behold my relations in glory !"

As she spoke this, she betrayed an enthusiastic rapture, and appeared herself to be transported with ecstasy. William

gazed at her with aſtoniſhment, and began to think that her mind was diſordered. He ſoon perceived that her monaſtic education and her early misfortunes had given her a tincture of ſuperſtitious enthuſiaſm. She told them, that after her father's death, deprived of her reaſon, ſhe wandered through the grove day and night in wild deſpair, without ſleep or refreſhment. One morning ſhe had ſunk, exhauſted, into a profound ſlumber, and in a dream God had revealed to her that her deliverance was at hand.

"Since that moment," purſued ſhe, "I have been in full poſſeſſion of my ſenſes; my ſorrow has become more placid. I have prepared a coffin to receive my body, and an angel is deſtined to receive my ſpirit. Congratulate me, the hour is not far diſtant!"

With ſecret compaſſion William liſtened to the viſionary maid; Frederick

turned

turned round, and dropped a ſilent tear. William was too well acquainted with mankind to know that argument and reaſon would here be fruitleſs. He rather appeared to have no doubt of the prophetic dream. He put the caſket in his pocket, and promiſed punctually to fulfill her commands. By degrees he endeavoured to awaken other images in her ſoul, to withdraw her attention from that ſingle object on which ſhe inceſſantly gazed. He continued to give the converſation a direction towards indifferent topics, and even to matters connected with Babet's family. He made her talk of her brothers, their perſon, their character, the regiments in which they had ſerved, and the viſits they had formerly paid her in the cloiſter.

From this he naturally paſſed to enquiries concerning the monaſtic ſyſtem of education. He affected to be more unacquainted with it than he really was.

He

He enquired after the mode of life, the plan of inſtruction, the connections and friendſhip to which ſuch a ſcene gave riſe.

At firſt Babet ſeemed to anſwer with reluctance; but, by degrees, ſo many ſcenes were recalled to her remembrance, ſo many youthful incidents occurred to her fancy, that at laſt, if ſhe was not talkative, ſhe took part in the converſation. She related many anecdotes; and, at laſt, ſhe felt a pleaſure in relating them. In a word, the charming vivacity which gradually diſplayed itſelf in her whole conduct, clearly ſhowed that ſhe was formed for cheerfulneſs, not for melancholy, and that ſolitary grief alone could have produced ſo violent an effect upon her temper.

She was aſtoniſhed when morning dawned, was vexed at her diſſipation, as ſhe called it, baſhfully apologized, and took her leave, to allow her gueſts to

enjoy repoſe. William threw himſelf on the ſtraw. He ſoon dropped into a placid ſlumber, while Frederick paced through the cavern, ſtanding ſtill occaſionally on the ſpot which Babet's foot had conſecrated.

CHAP. VII.

THE RIGHTS OF NATURE.

IT has an hundred times been ſaid that flattery is a poiſon. Well! be it ſo; but does it follow that it ought never to be employed? Do not the phyſicians preſcribe poiſons for the moſt deſperate diſeaſes?—Is not, for example, *Belladonna* conſidered an excellent remedy for a cancer?—And is not a deep-rooted grief more dangerous than this cruel malady?

Such were William's reflections when he awoke, after a few hours ſleep; and on them he formed the deſign to beguile the ſorrow of his benefactreſs by well-directed flattery. Really there are no means ſo well calculated to withdraw men from ſerious or gloomy objects, as this balſam

properly applied. You muſt be careful, however, not to betray the deſign. It muſt not be a viſible eſſence, it muſt be an inviſible perfume. It muſt not deſcend in ſhowers like the atmoſphere of our earth, but, like that of the moon, it muſt diſtil in dew. Oh! there is not a ſage in the univerſe who could withſtand the effect of this ſoothing anodyne.

When Babet returned, about noon, and brought with her, for the entertainment of her gueſts, what nature in the ravaged garden ſtill offered unſolicited, William began to play his part. He could not calculate indeed upon the aſſiſtance of his friend, for the man who truly loves cannot flatter. He ſummoned all his knowledge of the human heart, and all his experience. What he had often ſeen in the world, and had treated only with contempt, he now endeavoured to imitate. Pity and gratitude communicated an irreſiſtible force

to his words, and an ardour before which Babet's coldneſs began to melt. Sometimes he was able to extort a ſmile from her; and when ſhe detected herſelf in it, a ſtolen ſigh ſeemed to aſk forgiveneſs of her father's ſpirit. Before two hours had elapſed, William's flattering tongue had ſo far ſucceeded, that the lovely mourner ſat down to table with her gueſts, and ſhared the fruits ſhe had provided.

Day flew rapidly away. Babet with regret ſaw evening approach, for ſhe had inſenſibly acquired a taſte for ſociety. Her eye often dwelt with particular complacency on William, who principally ſupported the converſation. His unembarraſſed heart allowed him to diſplay all his amiable qualities, while Frederick ſat dreaming by his ſide, and, for fear of ſaying ſomething ſilly, choſe to be ſilent.

When the ſhades of night began to

close round, Babet ſent the girl and the footman out, different ways, to learn whether the tempeſt, which had raged ſo violently, was yet allayed. Both returned like Noah's pigeons with the olive-branch. However ſatisfactory this intelligence might be, it was received with welcome by nobody but William, who was extremely anxious to return to town, becauſe he was afraid that he and his companion might be miſſed, and conſidered as deſerters.

His friend was not at preſent affected by theſe conſiderations. He wiſhed to ſee the villa as thickly ſurrounded by murderers, as the nightly traveller in ſome regions of Africa ſees himſelf ſurrounded by moving fires, for he felt courage to defend Babet againſt a hoſt; and he found that it was in ſuch moments alone that he could teſtify to her his love. As no enemy, however, was to be ſeen, and as the fields were occupied only by crickets

and grafshoppers; as the owls glided out and in through the broken windows of the manfion, the two friends prepared for their departure.

Babet was penfive and melancholy when they went away. She accompanied them to the iron gate, and gave them her hand as they took leave. "Providence above," faid fhe, "has brought us together—be to me as brothers while I continue to fojourn here below.—It is but ten days to the wifhed for hour—vifit your fifter fometimes before fhe goes hence, provided you can do it without danger."

Frederick fmiled at the word *danger*. William promifed to come, were it even in *difguife*. Frederick fmiled at the word *difguife*. He had kiffed Babet's hand.—She had called him brother.—Where is the danger?—Why difguife?

They took their leave. Frederick often ftopped to look back, though it

 was

was quite dark. Babet ſtood at the gate, and liſtened to the footſteps of her gueſts, which ſounded through the ſilent night. She then ſlowly returned.—She thought of going to the grotto, to her father's body, yet deſcended penſive to the cavern. She threw herſelf on the bed of ſtraw, to meditate fully on her approaching death.

Since her acquaintance with William, this idea ſeemed to have acquired new charms, for with the ſolemn image of death ſhe aſſociated the agreeable picture of her new brother. She reſolved, that upon the eventful day he ſhould not leave her. She ſaw herſelf, ſtruck lifeleſs by the lightning, ſink into his arms—ſhe thought how he would ſtretch her body tenderly upon the graſs—how he would kneel beſide her—A tear dropped from his eye on her cold hand—and at the thought her cheek glowed—he impreſſes a brother's kiſs upon her pallid lips!

Thus were aſſociated with the thoughts of death many delightful images, drawn by the pencil of pureſt innocence in the moſt pleaſing colours. Death indeed ſtill was in the perſpective of the picture, but with a fainter light than the more captivating features. She expected, with a degree of impatience, a ſecond viſit from her gueſts. She no longer lay unconſcious on her father's coffin, but ſat upon it wiſtfully, and liſtened to the murmur of the waters which daſhed on the banks of the little iſland. The nightingale ſung in the grove, and ſhe blamed herſelf becauſe his melody gave her pleaſure. The ſervant brought her a pigeon for dinner. She chid him for ſuppoſing ſhe could be hungry; and when he was gone, ſhe ate firſt one wing, then another, then the whole pigeon.

A ſoft and ſecret melancholy ſometimes drove her from the grotto to the

houſe, from the windows of which ſhe had a view of the road, both on the right and left. She walked up and down through the empty apartment, and ſometimes threw a ſtolen glance on the ſhattered looking-glaſs.

Meanwhile, poor Frederick, ill at heart, ſtalked about like a ſpectre, and muſt have bled to death of the deep wound he had received, had not his friend, with unwearied attention, poured into it the balm of hope. As the words of his miſtreſs are to a lover ſacred as holy writ, Frederick, notwithſtanding his excellent underſtanding, was not diſinclined to believe that really in ten days a ſtroke of lightning would tear Babet from him; and William was obliged to laugh him out of this conceit, ſince to reaſon him out of it was impoſſible.

Even although, perhaps, Babet ſhould be ſaved from the dreaded lightning,

would ſhe be diſpoſed to forget her grief in his arms? The hope appeared too bold, for true love would make even a Narciſſus modeſt! William, who coolly conſidered the ſituation of affairs, endeavoured to remove every doubt, and to convince the timid lover that Babet's youthful innocence, her deſtitute ſituation, and the unoccupied ſtate of her heart, would enable him to ſecure her affection. He encouraged him, at leaſt, to make his eyes the interpreters of his heart, and not to appear ever before her with downcaſt looks. Frederick promiſed every thing, but did not keep his word; for firſt love embarraſſes every motion, becauſe it is ever fearful to offend.

They received a very agreeable piece of intelligence on their return to town. The perſons who had cut down the tree of liberty had been taken in another village, and condemned to an ignominious

punifhment. The two friends, therefore, were enabled, without danger, to continue their little excurfions, and Frederick wifhed to avail himfelf of this liberty, though a circumftance in itfelf very indifferent, to prevail upon William to pay Babet a fecond vifit the following day. William, however, more cool than his friend, was afraid that the enthufiaftic girl might be difpleafed, and thought it better to wait till the day after.

Frederick curfed the coldnefs of his companion, ftood the whole day cheerlefs at the window, and wondered to fee the people purfuing their occupations fo coolly. When it was fcarce midnight, he roufed William, who lay faft afleep, and maintained that it was already day-break. It was but the declining moon, which fhot a feeble ray into their apartment.

At laft the eaftern horizon was overfpread with purple clouds, and before the

firft

firſt rays of the ſun peeped through the grey twilight the two friends were already in the ſtreet. The doors were all ſhut, and their footſteps alone reſounded along the empty pavement. They had this time loaded their pockets with all kinds of proviſions, and hoped to prevail upon their benefactreſs to partake of a frugal meal. William meditated, as he walked along, how he ſhould tempt her from the gloomy grotto, where the terrific objects it contained furniſhed freſh food for her grief. His care, however, was unneceſſary; for when the travellers arrived at the iron gate they ſaw Babet ſitting under a lime-tree on the lawn, feeding her two hens with crumbs of bread.

The lovely creature bluſhed modeſtly, and bade them kindly welcome. William ſecretly made the agreeable remark that her hair was dreſſed with ſome degree of care, and that her boſom was

more ſtudiouſly covered than it was the firſt time they ſaw her.

They all ſat down under the lime-tree. The converſation of the little circle, indeed, was conſtrained. They ſeemed to be afraid to diſplay any ſymptoms of joy. The lovely dreamer was ſomewhat hurt to perceive that all alluſion to her affliction was carefully avoided, and ſhe herſelf likewiſe forbore to mention it. William exerted every effort in his power to animate the converſation, and he ſometimes ſucceeded. Babet appeared to feel his anxiety with gratitude, and repaid his exertions by many kind looks. In a word, her natural feeling for the pleaſures of life awoke. She again reſumed an intereſt in what paſſed around her. Of Frederick's love, however, ſhe entertained no ſuſpicion. A more experienced girl would have gueſſed, from his vacant ſtare, his embarraſſment when ſhe ſpoke to him, the

blufh upon his cheeks when her eye met his, what paffed in his heart. But Babet, educated in the feclufion of a cloifter, never fufpected the power of her charms.

The day paffed in the utmoft harmony. Babet led her guefts through the fields, the meadows, and gardens, pointed out and defcribed to them all its former beauties, every place that was now deftroyed. She dwelt with a melancholy pleafure on every fpot which had been the favourite of her father, and faid, that if fhe were not fo well convinced of her fpeedy death, fhe could not endure the melancholy profpect of thefe fcenes, but would fly from her country.

William feized this opportunity to defcant on the charms of his native land, and to declare with what cordial welcome fhe would there be received. He lamented that fate denied him the pleafure of being her deliverer. He ventured

tured even to exprefs the wifh that his prayers might avert the fatal lightning.

He then watched her countenance unobferved, to fee whether fhe betrayed any diflike at fuch an idea; and he had the fatisfaction to perceive that, though fhe was filent, her downcaft looks teftified ferioufnefs, not difpleafure. Contented with his firft fuccefs, he broke off the converfation, and left to her own imagination to complete the fketch in folitude.

When evening began to fpread its fhades the party feparated, with the promife of feeing each other daily till the fatal hour arrived. Poor Frederick's heart was more deeply pierced than ever, for Babet, in a few hours, with fifterly folicitude developed the whole charms of her foul; and an innocence, which Geffner's pencil alone could pourtray, diffufed round her perfonal charms the glory of an angel.

William's hopes were now ſanguine. He calculated upon ſtill more deciſive effects from his exertions during the nine days which remained. Babet flew to the grotto—for the firſt time ſhe found it inſpire her with a degree of horror.—She was aſtoniſhed to feel a ſecret diſguſt—and returned in deep meditation to the lime-tree.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

THE SPECTRE.

REVIEWERS and undertakers resemble each other in this, that they both perform their reſpective functions for hire; the latter are paid to mourn, the former to abuſe. Both of them are engaged indeed in preciſely the ſame occupation, that of making hired criticiſms, the latter upon men who are carried to the grave; the former upon books, which people are at perfect liberty, if they pleaſe, to carry to the ſame place.

Should any body obſerve that this remark is very unſeaſonable upon the preſent occaſion, I have two anſwers ready. Firſt, I follow the example of Cato, who, whatever ſubject might have been diſcuſſed in the ſenate, always concluded his ſpeech with: *Cæterùm puto Carthaginem*

eſſe

esse delendam; and the authority of this great example must be the more conclusive for my justification, as the republic of letters would evidently gain a great deal more by the extermination of Reviewers than Rome could do by the destruction of Carthage.

Secondly, this remark is not quite so foreign from the purpose as on the first glance might be imagined; for this true history now is at that very period which gives the Prometheuses among the reviewers an opportunity to surpass the work of the gods. Babet, will they say, the rapt enthusiast, that scarce seemed to touch the earth, now too easily admits of consolation, and forgets the murder of her father and brothers, as soon as if merely her lap-dog had torn her handkerchief. *There is no consistency in the character!*

Very well, gentlemen! It is a pity, however, that mother Nature cares as

little

little for your ſage rules as a lambkin in the meads would care for a dancing-maſter, who ſhould preſcribe how he ought to ſkip. The celebrated Mr. *Huber* (I had almoſt forgot to add, author of the *Secret Tribunal)* ſomewhere obſerves, that " Brutus is the moſt conſiſtent character in the hiſtory of the world." Although ſuch a remark is advanced only becauſe it ſounds extraordinary, it follows, from this hyper-critic's own confeſſion, that there are very few conſiſtent characters in the hiſtory of the world. The author of the world, we all know, is dame Nature ; and if ſhe exhauſted her powers on Brutus, Babet may juſtly hope to be forgiven.

We candidly acknowledge, therefore, that the good young lady, in conſequence of the repeated viſits of her new brothers, diſcovered in the laſt ten days of her life a quite different temper of mind from that which ſhe had diſ-

played

played when she rejected the casket, with contempt of all terrestrial things. She was now attached to life by secret wishes.

Three days had Babet, according to her calculation, still to live. On the first she confessed that she had too precipitately prayed for death; on the second she even ventured to think that God too hastily had granted her prayer; and on the third she trembled for the succeeding morn.

As soon as William observed this favourable disposition, he began to suggest doubts of the fulfilment of the prophetic dream. He repeated a number of examples of dreams which had never been fulfilled. He explained as well as he could (for who can perfectly explain it?) the effect of the state of the blood, or excessive agitation of the corporeal organs, upon the mind of the sleeper. Babet did not understand him; but she listened

with

with respect, and secretly wished he might be right.

She had insensibly conceived a strong attachment to William; with this attachment was connected a sisterly confidence, and in their walks she clung to his side with as little constraint as if he had been one of the nuns with whom she used to walk in the gardens of the convent. Frederick, on the contrary, seemed only the moon, which borrowed a feeble ray from the friendly sun. She esteemed him likewise, but it was more with a feeling of friendship. How could it be otherwise? Love had veiled all his splendid and amiable qualities in the mist of reserve.

When, on the evening before the awful day, they separated with beating hearts, the lovely Babet, with trembling voice, entreated her friends to return very early next day, that she might not be utterly deserted in her last hour.

William

William promifed for both; and as the fultry evening really portended a ftorm, they fcarce went an hundred yards from Babet's houfe, to be nearer at hand, and took up their lodgings at an inn.

A lover, as all the world knows, is ever in extremes. He is in raptures or in defpair; he is dumb or talkative; and when in the humour to fpeak, his fubject is fo inexhauftible, that he commonly fpares the hearer the trouble of an anfwer, and a tree or a man, therefore, are often equally his confidants. That Frederick, in the filence of night, in the fleeplefs hours, fhould dwell upon the charms of his beloved; that he fhould defcant with all his eloquence on Babet's beauty and innocence, was quite as natural as that William, who could hope to hear nothing new on this fubject, fhould fall afleep. Receiving no anfwer to his queftions, and hearing his companion breathe louder than before,

fore, the orator at length perceived that he was uttering his complaints to the bare walls. He was unwilling to disturb his friend's slumber; he rose, went out, and groped his way in the dark along the road.

As during the last ten days he had formed an acquaintance with every stone and tree which stood or lay in the road to Babet's house, it was not difficult for him, in spite of the darkness which surrounded him, to find the well-known path to the abode of his beloved, without stumbling or knocking his head against a post. He arrived safe at the iron gate, and through the rails contemplated with sighs the broken windows, from which a solitary lamp shed a feeble light. He walked backwards and forwards, breathed lengthened sighs, and in the silence of night repeated, sometimes aloud sometimes in a low voice, the name of Babet.

Alas! he knew not what agonising tortures

tures he had occafioned his beloved by this nocturnal excurfion. The timorous maiden had ftood at the window ever fince her friends had left her, gazing at the gloomy clouds which gathered in the weft, and feemed to carry in their bofom the arrow of death. The diftant lightning increafed her apprehenfion—her heart trembled as often as the flafh burft from the cloud !

But what were her feelings when, by this horrid light, fhe fuddenly faw a figure walking backward and forward at the iron gate !—when fhe heard profound fighs, and diftinctly heard her name pronounced !

My father's ghoft !—The idea ftruck horror through her whole frame, and her teeth chattered.—" The ghoft of my father fummons me hence !—My dream was no idle phantom of the brain !—My laft hour approaches !—The fpirits of the dead are ready to receive me !"

She dropped down upon her knees, and attempted to pray; but ſhe fell ſenſeleſs upon the floor. Frederick, unconſcious of the miſchief he had done, had now finiſhed his romantic excurſion; for the light ſtreaks which appeared in the eaſt announced the coming day. He returned, and awaked his friend. With the firſt dawn of morning they were at the door.

They aſcended the ſtair without noiſe, and found the ſervants ſtill buried in ſleep. They imagined that Babet was likewiſe in bed. William opened the door of her room as carefully as a mother who is fearful of diſturbing the ſlumbers of her ſick child. Frederick ſtood behind him, and threw a timid glance over his ſhoulders. The maid lay ſtretched upon the floor.

"She is aſleep," whiſpered William, and was about to retire. But Frederick, with ill preſaging alarm, advanced nearer,

er, took her hand, found it cold as clay, and ſcreamed: " She is dead!—The terrors of imagination have killed her!" William endeavoured, without ſucceſs, to moderate the tranſports of his grief. He ran through the room like a perſon frantic, and exclaimed in agonizing deſpair: " She is gone!—Is there now a compaſſionate thunderbolt reſerved for me!" With wild cries he threw himſelf on the ſuppoſed corpſe—with frantic grief he ſprang up to look for ſome weapon to put an end to his miſerable exiſtence. William beggedan d threatened—ſometimes with tenderneſs, ſometimes with anger—in vain! Frederick heard him not—till at laſt his friend ſeized him forcibly in his arms, and ſhouted in his ear: " Man! are you mad?—She is not dead!—her heart beats ſtill!"

Frederick now threw himſelf down tranſported beſide his beloved, laid his trembling hand upon her heart, felt it beat,

beat, and to the moſt violent grief ſucceeded the moſt immoderate expreſſions of joy. He preſſed William to his breaſt—embraced the old footman—he wept, and ſhouted. He never thought of applying the proper means to recover her from the ſwoon—it was enough that ſhe was alive—her heart beat, he thanked heaven with enthuſiaſm!

Meanwhile, William had rouſed the ſervant. Cold ſpring water was the only cordial with which ſhe could ſupply him. He ſprinkled Babet's face, rubbed her arms and temples, and in a few minutes ſhe opened her eyes.

She looked round wildly, and eagerly preſſed William's hand. "I thank you," ſaid ſhe, "for having come ſo early.—Soon, very ſoon, and my death-hour knells." William led her to the window, pointed out to her the beauties of the bluſhing morn, remarked how the black clouds diſperſed, how the thick

miſt

mist formed an ocean in the valley, all indications of a pleasant day. The blushing morn, however, had no charms for Babet. Her eye gazed wildly at the iron gate—there was the place where the spectre stalked—thence issued the dismal groans—thence it had called the name of Babet. In vain did William endeavour to amuse her mind, and to withdraw her attention from the object on which it dwelt. "Leave me," said she, "I must die—too sure this day I die.—My father's ghost has appeared to me—his warning summons has roused me from my sinful hopes.—I go to prepare for death."

Without farther explanation respecting the nature of the apparition, she retired into an adjoining room to pray. Astonished and chagrined, William looked at her, and cursed the demon that, with some new phantasy of a disordered imagination, had blasted the fruits of his

exertions. In vain the two friends endeavoured to gather from the domeſtics, whether, ſince laſt night, any thing extraordinary had occurred. They knew of nothing. Babet had ordered them to go to bed, and they obeyed without oppoſition, for it was no new thing for their miſtreſs not to undreſs at all. William could now no longer conceal the impreſſion which the circumſtance made upon his mind. He dreaded not indeed any miracle of nature; but he dreaded the wonderful effects of imagination, which, ſo often governed by phantoms of its own creation, ſilences the feeble voice of reaſon. In a word, he dreaded not Babet's death, but, what is worſe than death—madneſs. He endeavoured, as well as he could, to conceal theſe melancholy thoughts from his friend, who walked about with tottering ſteps and folded hands, in viſible agitation. Sometimes he ſtood gazing at the door

door through which ſhe had diſappeared. Sometimes he ſtopped ſhort, looked at him wiſtfully, as if to ſeek conſolation in his eye.

After the lapſe of an hour Babet returned to the room, and a ſupernatural ſerenity ſat majeſtic upon her brow. She ſpoke little, anſwered ſhortly, and ſeemed afraid to drop a ſingle word that could indicate a doubt of her approaching death—as if ſhe feared to loſe that compoſure and reſignation ſhe had prayed from heaven.

The converſation was very conſtrained. Of dreams, apparitions, and dying, the brothers would not talk, and the ſiſter would hear of nothing elſe. They walked up and down together, almoſt in ſilence. From Frederick's breaſt heaved long heavy ſighs, as if he himſelf had been condemned to die. Babet walked about in ſtill meditation, not a breath, not a footſtep was heard.—Spirits ſkim

along the earth—and Babet was already almoſt diſembodied.

William, from time to time, went to the window, and failed not always to obſerve, that the morning was delightful and ſerene, that not a threatening cloud hung on the horizon. The viſionary maid, however, heard his remarks with indifference, for the voice of the ſpectre ſtill vibrated in her ear.

CHAP. IX.

THE STORM.

WHEN the ſun had advanced far towards the meridian, and an oppreſſive heat announced the higheſt influence of his reign; when his burning rays penetrated through the unſhaded windows into the apartment, Babet herſelf propoſed a walk in the grove. It was not, indeed, in order to refreſh herſelf in the cooling ſhade; for ſhe would have been aſhamed, when at the very verge of the world of ſpirits, to have expreſſed any corporeal inconvenience. She wiſhed unobſerved to approach the turret which her dream had pointed out as the termination of her pilgrimage, and the humanity which ſtill adhered to her taught her the tender delicacy of concealing

 this

this circumſtance from her anxious friends.

William ſeized the proffered plan of amuſement, ſlight as it was. They went out; and the good-hearted William, whoſe ſuſpicions had wandered into a wrong track, ſtudiouſly endeavoured to conduct her far from the little iſland and the hideous grotto. Babet obſerved it, and ſaid with a ſmile: "Why this anxiety?—Why ſhould I now wiſh to viſit the melancholy remains of my father, ſince in a few hours I ſhall ſee him in glory?"

William ſighed ſoftly at her invincible credulity, and Frederick ſorrowfully broke the twigs as he paſſed along from every buſh. At laſt the ſultry noon-day heat compelled them to ſeek the moſt ſhady place of the grove, where a gravel foot-path led to a ſolitary hermitage, which received only a feeble light through

through a little window, round which ivy and wild hops were entwined.

Here a moſſy bank invited them to reſt from their fatigue. Babet ſeated herſelf between her two brothers; and William, who found that it was important to talk, be the ſubject what it might, in order to divert the attention of the viſionary, took up the moſt indifferent topics. He deſcanted upon the beauty of the butterfly, and the induſtry of the ant. At laſt, a coat of arms, which was painted on one of the panes, afforded matter for a long and intereſting converſation. Among many other uſeleſs things, Babet in the cloiſter had likewiſe learnt heraldry. The artful William, who really underſtood little of the ſubject, affected to be more ignorant than he really was, and with exemplary patience led her to explain all the mummery of creſts, ſupporters, &c. When upon a critical occaſion it is important

 to

to withdraw the mind from some ruling object, the most trifling means are not to be despised, since by the association of ideas they awaken they produce the happiest effects. Babet exhausted the science she had acquired in the cloister on the arms of her female friends, whose images recurred to her mind as she dwelt upon topics with which they were connected, or renewed the faded recollection of past scenes. Insensibly the subject withdrew her from the gloomy contemplation of death. Who knows how far William might have succeeded, for two hours had thus elapsed, when suddenly the noise of the distant thunder struck alarm into the little party!

Babet grew pale—the blood forsook Frederick's cheeks—even William was disconcerted, and secretly repined at fortune, which seemed resolved still farther to prove the poor superstitious maid. All three sprang up, and hastened

tened to the door. The horizon was overcaſt, the wind howled through the trees, the croaking ravens flew to their neſts, and the birds fluttered about in alarm.

Babet folded her trembling hands: "Follow me!" ſaid ſhe with faltering voice; "leave me not!"

Frederick was ſo confounded and agitated by what he ſaw, and what he felt, that he knew not what he did. "Would to God!" ſaid he as he ſeized Babet's hand, and preſſed it eagerly, "would to God I could die with you!"—She ſtarted, and gazed at him wildly. She then gently diſengaged herſelf, and flew ſo rapidly through the thick buſhes, that the two friends could hardly follow her. The ſtorm approached nearer and nearer, the big drops fell, the wind whiſtled, and the ruſtling leaves were ſhaken from the trees.

Breathleſs ran Babet through a mea-

dow, which the river formed into a peninſula, at the extremity of which ſtood the ruins of the old tower, under the nodding walls of which ſhe reſolved to bury herſelf. William followed her cloſe, and overtook her juſt as ſhe ſunk down exhauſted upon a ſtone, and ſtretched out her arms to Heaven to receive the angel of death.

Her brothers kneeled by her ſide. With terror and the agitation of her rapid race her breaſt was like to burſt. William looked round, and perceived that in this dangerous ſituation accident might very eaſily realiſe Babet's prophetic dream; for the turret was ſurrounded by tall oaks, whoſe tops defied the tempeſt, and ſeemed boldly to tempt the lightning down. But it would have been in vain to mention this danger. The luckleſs Babet was already almoſt in the agonies of death.

The black cloud hung directly over

their head—the thunder pealed tremendous—the lightning darted quicker and more vivid—the wind ſuddenly died away—the rain ceaſed—a ſullen ſilence reigned over the ſullen landſcape—a ſultry breeze tainted every flower—death ſeemed to hang the threatening clouds in maſſy chains over their heads—Babet breathed languid—the luſtre of her eye was faded—Hark! the lightning craſhes upon the turret, ſhivers the wall, the ruins roll into the river, and the earth trembles.

"*Jeſu Maria!*" cried a voice from the midſt of the ruins.—Babet lay lifeleſs on the ground—the hail deſcended in torrents—Frederick was motionleſs—William lifted Babet, who lay ſenſeleſs, covered her with his great-coat, and turned towards the ruins, from whence the voice had iſſued. He ſaw, and ſhuddered.—Through the gaping wall, between ſtones which ſtill ſeparated and

tumbled down, appeared the figure of a young man as if rising out of the grave. Pale and haggard, covered only with a few rags, he gazed wildly at the strangers, and advanced in silence like a spectre.

"Who art thou?" cried William. The spectre answered not. The rain beat on his uncovered head; he visibly trembled, and endeavoured to hide his naked limbs. Roused by William's summons, his friend turned round, and gazed at the figure, which inspired a mingled feeling of compassion and fear. He sprang up, advanced hastily towards the apparition, and cried in a rougher voice: "Who are you? What do you want?"

"Spare me!" said the young man with trembling voice; "you see that God has now spared me.—I beheld from the turret how you kneeled by the side of this virtuous maid.—Happy for me that you

prize

prize her so much! My Babet will pray for me!"

"*Your* Babet?" cried Frederick starting back, and eyeing the figure with doubtful penetrating looks, and reluctantly perceived in him a handsome young man, whom want and misery had worn to the bone.

"*Your Babet!*" repeated William with curiosity.

"*My Babet!*" said the young man somewhat more firmly, and advanced uninterrupted to the lifeless maid, kneeled beside her, and endeavoured to warm her cold hands between his. Frederick stood gazing speechless—an indignant feeling darted through his heart. He felt as if the odious wish arose in his mind that Babet might never awake.

Meanwhile the stormy clouds had spent their fury, the thunder now rolled at a greater distance, a soft shower revived the earth, the flowers again reared their

their heads, the birds began to twitter; with the birds and the flowers Babet alſo awoke, and found herſelf—in the arms of her brother.

His countenance was the firſt object which met her half-opened eyes; it was not extraordinary, therefore, that her imagination, aſſailed by dreams and by realities, ſhould fancy that ſhe awoke in Elyſium. She thought herſelf deceaſed, and tranſported to the abodes of the bleſſed.

"My brother Philip!" ſaid ſhe in feeble accents, "has death again united us? — Where is our father? — Why comes he not to receive his daughter?"

When he heard the unſuſpicious name of brother, peace returned to Frederick's breaſt. The youth, againſt whom he thought he had felt an emotion of hatred, ſuddenly became dear to him—he was Babet's brother!

It was a long time before Babet could perſuade

perſuade herſelf that ſhe was really alive; the ſuppoſed ſpirit of her brother before her ſupported the deception, which was not in any degree removed by the preſence of her friends, for ſhe believed that they too had been killed by the lightning. The youth, by lengthened miſery and continual danger, from which he had not yet eſcaped, was weakened both in mind and body; he ſtill conſidered the ſtrangers as purſuers, who thirſted for his blood. In Frederick's boſom, joy on Babet's recovery ſtruggled with the apprehenſion of what might be the conſequence of her having found a brother, who might perhaps diſapprove his love. Theſe doubts kept him penſive and ſilent.

William was the only one who, in a few minutes, recovered his preſence of mind. He obſerved that this place, drenched with rain, and the melancholy proſpect of the ruins, was not calculated

for

ſor receiving mutual explanations. He made a ſign to his friend to lead the exhauſted Babet home, while he himſelf ſupported her tottering brother. The way was long through the dripping grove. Whenever a drop from the branches fell upon Babet's hand or cheeks, the poor maid ſtarted, and gazed at every tree or buſh with a certain vacant ſmile, which ſhewed how feebly her reaſon yet ſtruggled with the deluſions of imagination.

Frederick's eyes hung upon her with anxious ſolicitude; her arm lay in his; he trembled like the aſpen-tree, whoſe overhanging leaves cooled the glow of his cheeks; it was the moſt painful journey he had ever performed. He thought he ſhould never be able to reach its termination; he looked towards the houſe, and yet wiſhed that it were miles diſtant.

William was examined with keenneſs

and

and apprehenſion by his haggard companion. The nearer they approached the manſion-houſe, the more his hollow eye teſtified ſuſpicion and uneaſineſs. Often he was on the point of running away, and probably he would have yielded to this impulſe had he felt himſelf ſtrong enough to eſcape from two vigorous purſuers. He trembled as he entered the houſe, and his confidence did not return till on the ſtair he met the faithful old footman, who threw himſelf at his feet with ſhouts of joy.

They at laſt reached Babet's apartment, where the brother and ſiſter viewed every thing around them with looks of wildneſs and ſurpriſe. William preſcribed for them refreſhment and repoſe, medicines of powerful virtue even for diſeaſed minds.

CHAP. X.

THE SEPARATION.

CHEVALIER BELLOY, the fame whom his fifter imagined to be on his way to America, had feen his father and brother murdered by his fide, and had withdrawn himfelf from the fury of his perfecutors by taking an afylum among fome inacceffible ruins, which in the amufements of his boyifh days had been thoroughly explored, and were perfectly familiar to him. Here he ventured for many weeks only to creep out with the owls, to gather wild roots and fruits for his fubfiftence. At firft he fuppofed that the whole manfion was deftroyed, and that his fifter too had fallen a prey to the rage of his fanguinary perfecutors, till one day, through the chink of his retreat,

retreat, he ſaw her in deep ſorrow walk-ing at the foot of the tower.

He was on the point of running down to throw himſelf in her arms, when he was deterred by a dread of the loud ex-preſſions of her ſudden joy. He did not know who might be in the neighbour-hood; whether ſhe might not be a pri-ſoner. Had he not reaſon to dread ſpies and ambuſh in every thicket?—The ſorrowful Babet again retired from the tower; and though in a few days after want and affection had overcome all his ſcruples, and he was determined to come forth in ſpite of every danger, the lovely form never again appeared to his view.

At laſt, when he had no longer any means of ſupporting his exiſtence, he re-ſolved in deſpair to quit his retreat, and again throw himſelf in his ſiſter's arms, or expoſe himſelf to the daggers of his blood-thirſty murderers. He had for

his purpose fixed upon the day when the roots he had collected by moonlight were exhausted, and he had no longer any means of supporting his wretched existence.

This, however, was the very day when our fugitives had been driven into the grotto by the wild rabble, who filled the garden, the grove, and the whole neighbourhood with their frantic shouts. Philip thought he was betrayed, that this careful search, this roar of the wild beasts for prey was directed against him. More than once, indeed, the tower had been surrounded by the raging mob; the boldest of them ventured into the tower, and clambered over the moss-grown ruins. As the only access to Philip's retreat was by a small opening, before which he had piled up the stones in artful disorder, he escaped their search.

As, however, nothing appeared more certain than that he was the object of

their

their purſuit, his fears were redoubled, and in the firſt days which ſucceeded this incident he did not even truſt his life to the friendly darkneſs of night, but reſigned himſelf a prey to the moſt preſſing hunger and thirſt, till he was almoſt too much reduced to be able to quit the place of his retreat.

Meanwhile he ſometimes ſaw his ſiſter, in the neighbourhood of the tower, and rejoiced to ſee her ſafe. Now, however, ſhe appeared to be attended by two ſtrangers, whoſe ſuſpicious preſence prevented him from diſcovering himſelf, more eſpecially as the deep grief which Babet's features bore gave him reaſon to apprehend that her attendants were not friends but guards.

When firſt in the obſcurity of night he ventured out to allay his thirſt in a neighbouring pond, deſpair drove him into the court of his father's houſe; and had he found the door open, he would

in ſpite of all danger have penetrated to his ſiſter's chamber; but all was faſt. Should he make a noiſe, ſhould he knock at the door, muſt he not meet the ſuſpicious ſtrangers whom he daily ſaw wandering in the garden? Irreſolute he walked about, till the firſt cock-crow chaſed him back to his ruins.

Yet longer to endure this accumulation of miſery was beyond the ſtrength of a young man reared in the lap of proſperity, on whom every joy of life had ſhed its gentleſt influence, and whom the winds of Heaven had never viſited too roughly. Want and deſpair unfolded that courage which effeminacy and profuſion had weakened; for all our virtues and vices are the offspring of natural or artificial wants. He had formed an irrevocable determination the enſuing night to force his way into his father's houſe, and, if it was poſſeſſed by murderers, to die in his ſiſter's arms.

The

The tempeſt anticipated the execution of his deſign, ſprang open his dungeon, and accidentally threw him into the hands of friends.

Such was the ſtory which he communicated when refreſhment had recovered him from the firſt ſtupefaction of returning ſenſibility. The diſcovery that William and Frederick were priſoners of war inſpired him with confidence. Their blue coats, which he had hitherto miſtaken for the uniform of the national guard, he no longer viewed with abhorrence. Theſe men had fought for *his* rights; they were of *his* political faith, and could not betray him. When ſimilar neceſſities and ſimilar principles form a point of union among men, the moſt ſuſpicious ſouls ſoon cordially fraterniſe.

The clouds which had obſcured Babet's mind now began to diſperſe. She felt that ſhe was alive, and appeared to be pleaſed at the feeling. William, who

who anxioufly obferved every change of her countenance, now ventured more directly to pronounce the prophetic dream to be a delufion of the imagination; and to refute his opinion, fhe recapitulated the ftory of the apparition of her father, and the awful fummons, with the minuteft circumftances. When fhe led her friends to the window, to fhow them the place at the gate where the fpectre had walked and fighed, Frederick blufhed, and ftammered out the confeffion, that he was the figure which had occafioned her fo much uneafinefs, and he refpectfully begged her forgivenefs for having fighed fo loud.

Babet's joy at this difcovery ferved to conceal the ingenuous fhame which glowed in her cheeks, on hearing Frederick's confeffion. His romantic nocturnal excurfion recalled to her mind the uncommon eagernefs with which, at the door of the hermitage, he had

expreffed

expreffed the wifh that he might die with her. Inexperienced as fhe was in the tender paffion, fhe yet would have fworn that this was love—and the rofes on her cheeks changed into the deepeft fcarlet.

Philip, who had long known that paffion, gueffed what paffed in the heart of the ftranger. The conqueft his fifter had made feemed to give him pleafure, as in his own deftitute and unfettled fituation he was unable to afford her protection; and he rejoiced at the profpect of her honour being fecured, in a union with a man of worth. That the modeft, backward Frederick was no feducer his own experience convinced him, for at the firft glance he difcovered a man unhackneyed in the ways of vice. The fame evening, too, William completely removed every doubt, by availing himfelf of a favourable opportunity

to acquaint him with the pure and honourable paffion of his friend.

"Is he a nobleman?" was the only queftion which the prejudices of this Frenchman of the old fchool fuggefted; and when William, by an evafion, had fatisfied him upon that fubject, he joyfully gave his confent to the propofal, that, as foon as an exchange of prifoners took place, Babet fhould accompany Frederick as his bride.

The bafhful lover meanwhile had remained alone with the object of his wifhes, but his courage had ceafed with the tempeft. He allowed the favourable opportunity of completing in the evening what he had begun in the morning, to efcape. They both fat in profound filence—both fixed their eyes on the ground—Frederick becaufe he had already faid too much, and Babet becaufe fhe had heard too much to remain

longer doubtful of the ſituation of his heart.

In the delightful feeling of having eſcaped the dangers by which they were threatened, the little party ſpent, in friendly confidence and harmony, the remainder of a day which had begun with ſuch unfavourable auſpices. They now began to conſult what was to be done with Philip. Babet inſiſted that he ſhould take refuge in the inacceſſible cavern till the republican tempeſt had ſpent its fury. Even Philip himſelf was at firſt inclined to this propoſal. When he was informed, however, of the treaſure which had been found, and ſaw the caſket full of diamonds, with the value of which he acquainted the inexperienced company, he ſuddenly changed his reſolution.

He was too generous, indeed, or rather too thoughtleſs, notwithſtanding Babet's entreaties, to take more than a

ſmall proportion of his father's bequeſt. He would not, as he ſaid, diminiſh the little dowry of his ſiſter, as the three rings which he appropriated to himſelf were fully ſufficient to carry him out of the territories of France. He then propoſed to equip himſelf in a manner ſuitable to his rank, haſten to the army of the Prince of Condé, and never again ſet his foot on the ſoil of his ungrateful country, till he came back to reclaim his paternal inheritance with armed hand. "Thy fate, my dear Babet," ſaid he with a ſignificant ſmile, "I commit to theſe brave men. They are noblemen, they are ſoldiers, and I rely upon them with confidence. To them I transfer the father's authority and the brother's duties, which fortune now denies me an opportunity to exerciſe. Under their protection leave this deſolate manſion, as ſoon as they invite you to fly to a more ſafe and agreeable retreat."

In

In vain Babet laboured to prevail upon him to prefer the ſecurity of the cavern to an unſafe flight; in vain ſhe offered, ſince he was not to be diverted from his reſolution, to accompany him and ſhare every danger. He urged ſo many plauſible and powerful reaſons againſt this propoſal, and William, although he did not altogether approve the thoughtleſſneſs with which the Chevalier entruſted the happineſs of his ſiſter in the hands of men whom he had never before ſeen, ſupported him ſo ably, that Babet was at laſt obliged to yield.

The old ſervant procured his young maſter the dreſs of a peaſant. They cut off his hair, changed his fair complexion into a ſun-burnt olive, and equipped in large wooden ſhoes, accompanied by the faithful old footman, who knew every bye road and footpath, the inconſiderate youth at midnight took leave of his

weeping ſiſter. He firſt took the road to Montauban, where he expected the aſſiſtance of a ſteady friend to enable him to proceed on his journey.

After his departure, the little ſociety he had left behind lived more than a month in great concord and tranquillity. Frederick enjoyed many delightful hours, but it was only in ſeeing his beloved; for as often as William either ſeriouſly or with raillery reproached him with his timidity, and often as he himſelf formed the heroic reſolution this day to open his heart, and to entreat from Babet's lips the deciſion of his fate, yet he continued to return at night to town as undecided as he had come, and communicated only to the trees the ſecret which he ought to have confided to the ear of his miſtreſs.—We can indeed offer but one apology for this conduct. Babet carefully avoided being alone with him,

him, and a declaration of love, even in prefence of the beft friend, is, God knows why, a very unpleafant tafk.

Matters, however, could not long remain in this ftate. It was improper that a young lady of fixteen fhould receive daily vifits from two young officers. In the prefent fituation of the country, indeed, nobody paid any attention to their conduct, and the new marriage code juftified many things which formerly would have attracted cenfure. But Babet herfelf felt the doubtful nature of her fituation, her tender fenfibility revolted at it, and her helpleffnefs alone led her to fuppress the dictates of her trembling delicacy. To this likewife was added, the general report of a fpeedy exchange of prifoners, an event which might daily take place. A fudden departure then muft render the favourable iffue of Frederick's declaration ftill more doubtful; for experience tells

us, that it is easier to obtain a lady's consent, when there is the prospect of a long courtship, and when she has time to think of her new situation. Precipitation might ruin all.

This and much more did William daily urge to his bashful friend; nor was Frederick insensible of the justice of his remonstrances, but he wanted courage to obey his own conviction. One day, as they were walking slowly home in the dusk of the evening, William bethought himself of endeavouring to give new effect to his solicitations, by suggesting something, the mere possibility of which is sufficient to drive a lover to despair. "What," said he, "if by your procrastination the chastity and innocence of your mistress should be exposed to danger? What, if a horde of frantic persons, hurried on by some criminal ebullition —a circumstance indeed which cannot be foreseen, but which, in the present frenzy

frenzy of the people, may always be apprehended—ſhould again burſt into Babet's houſe?—The firſt time, the ghaſtly ſight of her father's corpſe allayed their fury, but what now will protect her from their brutal outrage?"

Frederick ſtopped, ſtared wildly round, and trembled.

"Who," proceeded William, "who will anſwer that even now, while we are walking quietly here—"

"For heaven's ſake, no more!" cried Frederick with trembling lips, "you have ſucceeded, here is my hand.—Sure as theſe planets revolve over our heads—ſure as God is enthroned above theſe planets, to-morrow ſhall I tell her all!"

William received the hand and promiſe of his friend. In order to facilitate this bold attempt, he reſolved to remain at home next day, under pretence of indiſpoſition. Frederick hurried on before him, immerſed in thought. He

imagined himſelf at the feet of his miſtreſs, ſought words to expreſs his paſſion, and found that either Babet's language was poor of expreſſion, or he had made but little proficiency in the French tongue.

Scarcely had they reached their habitation, ſcarcely had William dropped into his firſt ſlumber, and Frederick had reſigned himſelf to the ſweet dreams of love, when a violent knocking was heard at the door, which was opened by the landlord. A band of men burſt violently into the houſe, and a file of troops entered the room. William ſtarted from his ſleep, rubbed his eyes, and aſked what was the matter. An officer of the national guard, who was by trade a butcher, told him roughly, that the number of priſoners of war in this little town was by far too great; that ſymptoms of diſorder had been obſerved, and the municipality had therefore thought proper

per to transfer the half of their guefts to the next department. Lieutenant Perlftadt was among the latter, and therefore he would be fo good as to follow him immediately.

Frederick was confounded. William collected himfelf, and expreffed a hope that at leaft they would not feparate him from his friend, but fend them together to the fame place.

"To feparate fuch friendfhip," purfued the officer bluntly, "is the very object the municipality have in view." He begged them to make hafte, as he had many other prifoners to call out of their beds. "On account of the temper of the people," added he, "who hate all foreigners, you may confider yourfelves indebted to the magiftrates for giving orders that you fhould be fent out of the town by night."

William eafily faw that all kind of oppofition would here be fruitlefs. Frederick

was too much ſtupefied by the order to be able to make any preparation for his departure. William packed up the few neceſſaries which belonged to his friend, and whiſpered in his ear: " Be eaſy! I will ſpeak to Babet to-morrow upon your affair."

Frederick embraced William, and took leave in ſilence.—Silently he walked along the ſtreets, ſurrounded by grenadiers. At the gate he found the troop of his companions already aſſembled; he joined them without ſaying a word, and a ſigh firſt relieved the oppreſſion of his breaſt, when, in the ſtillneſs of night, the detachment filed paſt Babet's houſe.

CHAP. XI.

THE FEVER.

THE lovely mourner did not hear with perfect indifference of the departure of her lover. Besides that a young man who dotes upon a woman with his whole soul must ever have a claim to some consideration, even with the most inflexible beauty, Babet really felt a cordial regard for Frederick; and who knows how far this feeling which she indulged without distrust might have carried her, had not William's presence, unconsciously to both of them, extinguished every softer emotion for his friend?

The sorrow she felt at Frederick's departure was rather sympathy with William's grief; nay, we must confess that this

this feeling was instantly blended with a sensation of secret joy, because in future she should enjoy William's company without the constraint which the penetrating eye of a lover imposed. Yet let it not be supposed that her mind distinctly avowed this thought. No; it was only an obscure feeling which she never properly explained to herself, and which, perhaps, she did not exactly understand.

With the most childish unembarrassment she laid her hand in his during their walks, or she clung to him when the cold harvest wind rustled through the trees; or she would allow him to carry her over a ditch; or eagerly snatched the glass from his hand when he was over-heated, and was about to swallow a hasty draught.—In a word, she gave him involuntarily so many proofs of her innocent attachment, and the sparks of love diffused so many new charms over

her

her enchanting form, that it required the infinite affection he bore Jeanette, and the pure friendſhip he entertained for Frederick, to enable him to avoid the dangerous influence of a paſſion, which it would have been criminal to indulge.

Never, perhaps, had his conſtancy ſuſtained a ſeverer trial. Better acquainted than Babet with the wanderings of the human heart, he ventured to examine the ſtate of his feelings; he could not but perceive that the beauty and innocence of this maid powerfully intereſted him, he trembled when he contemplated the precipice on which he ſtood, and reſolved, the better to avoid the danger, to haſten the diſcovery which he had promiſed to communicate of his friend's attachment.

He was not deterred from the performance of his promiſe by obſerving

that Babet avoided all converſation upon this ſubject ; that ſhe endeavoured to interrupt what ſhe could not altogether ſhun. He declared to her with warmth and importunity, that it was in her power to make his friend happy, and at the ſame time to confer the greateſt happineſs upon himſelf. Babet had but one anſwer to all that William urged ſo eloquently in favour of the abſent lover.

" But do I love him ?" ſaid ſhe bluſhing, while ſhe peeped through the veil over her long ſilken eye-laſhes. " But do I love him ?" repeated ſhe with glowing cheeks, as ſhe darted a glance at the more fortunate advocate, which told him what he durſt not ſuppoſe. In a word, the ſuitor was obliged to content himſelf with the equivocal anſwer : " that ſhe would leave her reſolution to be formed by time ; that ſhe would not ſtudiouſly reſiſt his wiſhes, but would

candidly acknowledge whenever ſhe began to feel any thing more for Frederick than eſteem."

His abſence, while William was daily with her, was not very well calculated indeed to effect ſo favourable an alteration. And why then did not William modeſtly decline his viſits, when he but too diſtinctly perceived that his intercourſe with Babet would be fatal to his friend?—Two ſophiſtical reaſons, backed by vanity, prevented this neceſſary ſtep. "She is quite alone," thought he, "ſhe has no protector but me. I cannot venture to abandon the young helpleſs orphan to chance. And beſides, the intereſt of my friend! Muſt I not rather redouble my viſits, to talk to her daily of his accompliſhments, and thus by degrees animate her heart to love?"

Alas! all this might have perfectly ſucceeded, had he only appriſed her of the ſecret that he was married; that he

was united to an amiable wife, and was now perhaps a father. But we must here confess a weakness of our hero—a weakness which he had in common with three-fourths of his sex. Although unquestionably he laid no claim to Babet's love, yet he secretly felt himself so flattered by it, that such a discovery daily became more unpleasant. Often the decisive word hovered upon his lips; but one of Babet's ingenuous glances again overthrew his resolution; and though he did not use the smallest effort to cherish the flame, it was high treason to friendship and to love not to extinguish it. Far be it from us, therefore, to attempt to justify our hero's foible, who, in this instance, allowed himself to be governed by his vanity.

He did not attempt to justify himself at the bar of his conscience. He bitterly reproached his own conduct, and daily procrastinated with honest but unavailing

availing refolutions, till a good angel came feafonably to his relief.

One evening when he entered his apartment in profound meditation, he found a letter from Jeanette lying upon the table. He blufhed, preffed the well-known characters to his lips, and haftily broke the feal. She informed him of her happy delivery, defcribed the beauty of the lovely boy, her maternal tranf-ports, her anxiety to fee the beloved fa-ther.—All was tendernefs and love. Not a trace of jealoufy was to be found in the whole letter; every line difcover-ed the fondeft confidence, which rejected the moft diftant thought of the poffibi-lity of infidelity. Ha! this generofity touched him to the quick. A tear ftart-ed in his eye; he raifed his eyes, and fecretly fwore to God and his confcience to appear before Babet next day with this letter in his hand.

And indeed this time he would have

kept

kept his word, but the caprice of fortune was not yet weary of embittering his cup of life. In the morning William awoke in a ſtrong fever, which had been occaſioned by a cold he had caught in coming home one wet harveſt evening. At firſt he paid no attention to it. He attempted to riſe and put on his clothes, but ſcarcely had he left his bed, when the fever attacked him more violently. One ſhivering fit ſucceeded another, and again compelled him to return to bed.

There was but one phyſician in the town, who combined with William's impatience to increaſe a ſlight indiſpoſition. On the fifth day he felt his ſtrength ſo impaired by a profuſion of drugs, that he began to fear he ſhould never more reviſit his native land.

When Babet had for ſome days expected in vain a viſit from her friend, ſhe ſent a peaſant boy to the town to enquire after him. The news of the

danger

danger in which the man ſhe ſecretly loved was placed, plunged her into unſpeakable anxiety. An hundred times ſhe was on the point of flying to his bedſide, and an hundred times her female modeſty withheld her. She now felt, and for the firſt time acknowledged to herſelf, how much ſhe was attached to William. She now ſaw that it was on his account that life had acquired new charms. Two or three times a day ſhe ſent the boy to town to bring her tidings of his health. The impatience with which ſhe expected his return, the inquiſitive anxiety with which ſhe ran to meet him, indubitably teſtified the warmth of her attachment.

William's illneſs, though not dangerous, was very lingering. It left a languor and debility behind, which prevented him from going abroad. In a few weeks he again walked through the room; but he could not mount the ſtair, and durſt

durſt not venture to expoſe himſelf to the bleak autumn winds. He always ſent, however, the moſt flattering accounts to his anxious friend, and was ſo accuſtomed to the appearance of the little meſſenger, that at the hour when the latter uſed to arrive he ſtood at the window, and expected him with impatience.

All at once the boy failed to come at the uſual hour. He came not in the morning; he did not appear in the evening. This ſurpriſed William the firſt day; the ſecond it gave him uneaſineſs; the third his anxiety was extremely painful; and on the fourth he could no longer endure the tortures of ſuſpenſe. He threw on his great-coat, ſupported himſelf on a crutch, and ſlowly bent his way along the well-known road.

When he ſaw at a diſtance Babet's habitation, his heart beat; but he carried his taliſman, Jeanette's letter, in his

his boſom, and it was the anxiety of friendſhip alone which cauſed his agitation. Expectation redoubled his ſtrength and his ſpeed. He entered the gate with inquiſitive looks; he went through the deſolate court; he aſcended the ſtair, found all the doors open, and all the apartments empty. Not a trace was to be ſeen of Babet or her ſervant; not a ſound announced the preſence of a human being.

"Perhaps," thought he, "ſome new tumult has compelled her to take refuge in the cavern." He endeavoured to grope his way in the dark down to the dungeon, and to find the place where the entrance of the cavern was guarded by looſe ſtones. He found it, and whiſpered ſoftly—then louder and louder: "Babet! It is I! it is your friend!"—In vain, all was ſilent.

"Perhaps," did hope again ſuggeſt, "ſolitude has renewed her enthuſiaſtic

turn.

turn. Perhaps I ſhall find her in the grotto."—With much difficulty he ſucceeded in finding his way back through the dark winding paſſages. He went to the garden, traverſed the grove through the leafleſs trees, went ſoftly over the bridge, ſtood before the door of the grotto, and ſaw nothing but the picture of deſolation.

"My God!" exclaimed he, "what can have become of the helpleſs creature?"—With exhauſted ſtrength he pryed round the whole neighbourhood, viſited the hermitage, ſearched the ruins of the tower, through which he clambered, calling every where the name of Babet—but in vain.

One time the murmur of the ſtream deceived his ear; again the buz of a graſshopper in the neighbouring thicket. Still he hoped to claſp Babet; but his hopes deceived him, and every moment his ſtrength decreaſed. At laſt he ſunk

down

down exhausted under the lime-tree on the lawn, and fell into a kind of unconscious stupor. "Is there then no compassionate mortal at hand, who can give me some intelligence of her?—Would I could but see the little messenger!"—In vain; his vows were unheard, and the approaching night obliged him at last to think of returning home without being able to form one probable conjecture respecting Babet, to cheer him on his solitary way.

Distracted by gloomy presages, tortured by the thought of the despair into which his friend would be plunged by the intelligence, he proceeded on to the town in sorrowful plight, his head reclining on his breast, when he met a peasant boy chanting merrily, "*Allons, enfans de la patrie!*" The sound roused him from his reverie. He looked up—it was the little messenger. "Ha!" cried he hastily, "what has become of

the lady, who for fome weeks paft fent you daily to enquire for me?"

"The lady?" faid the boy carelefsly, "I don't know. Three days ago fhe engaged me to come to her, as ufual, the following day. When I went, however, fhe was gone; I found nobody at all in the houfe."

The boy could tell him nothing more. Tired of importunate queftions, he took off his hat, again began to fing, and went his way.

CHAP. XII.

THE CONFLAGRATION.

BABET's ſudden elopement made ſo violent an impreſſion upon William, that his illneſs became more ſerious than ever, and he would not perhaps have eſcaped a dangerous relapſe, if he had had leiſure to dwell upon his ſituation, and had followed the advice of his phyſician, who ordered him to keep his bed; for nothing, perhaps, tends more to confirm ſickneſs than ſuch a regimen. He now forgot his own health, and made inceſſant enquiries after Babet in all the neighbouring country; traverſed every road, and ſearched every village, to diſcover ſome traces of her. Thus the freſh air and exerciſe ſuperſeded the phyſician,

and completely cured the patient without farther prescription.

His conscience now became uneasy, and smarted severely at the least touch. To the blame which he justly had incurred, his ingenious sensibility added a new charge, which preyed upon him no less acutely. When after long enquiry and reflection William could discover no other reason for Babet's mysterious flight, vanity at last whispered him, that she had fled from him to seek that cure from the soothing hand of time, which his coldness had apprised her that she could not expect from love.

Alas! had he but told her sooner that he was married, this would never have happened. If a traveller ignorant of his way comes to a thick gloomy wood, and finds a high road, he proceeds with caution; even a foot-path may induce him to go on; but if there is neither beaten track nor path-way, he returns. So is

it with the labyrinth of Love, in which Cupid's bye roads abound, but through which, too, the great high road of Hymen leads. If the latter is shut, some Werter seeks a forbidden path; a virtuous maid turns quick and flies, however sweetly Love's groves and nightingales may entice.—Babet would have overcome her passion, she now had been the bride of his friend, had not childish vanity—Alas! how he blushed for his weakness!—and be assured, the worst kind of shame is that which surprises us when there is none to witness its effects.

Where now was he to enquire for Babet?—Where obtain intelligence of her? —It was dangerous to enquire after her with too much anxiety. The steps of the prisoners were watched with jealousy; their conversation and their conduct were marked. Babet's family was obnoxious; the warm interest he expressed for her might excite suspicion of

a ſecret connection, and at this time a ſecret connection was always conſidered a conſpiracy. He durſt venture, therefore, only to put indirect queſtions, or endeavour by ſome artifice to diſcover what he ſought; but the unſatisfactory anſwers which he thus obtained, afforded him, no light in his darkneſs. He at laſt was ſilent, and expected from accident a clue to the myſtery.

In order, if poſſible, to put himſelf in the way of ſuch a diſcovery, he wandered about from morning till night through all the villages in the neighbourhood, and failed not from time to time to viſit Babet's habitation, which he ſtill found deſolate and forlorn.

One evening he wandered weary with his ſearch through a village, returning cheerleſs home with ſtill renewed diſappointment. Scarcely had he got through the village, when ſuddenly he heard a cry of Fire! He looked back, and

and ſaw a cottage in flames, which ſpread ſo rapidly, that before William could reach the ſpot the neighbouring houſes were in a blaze. The inhabitants flocked together from all quarters; every thing that could be reſcued from the flames was ſaved, and William vigorouſly contributed his aſſiſtance to carry off whatever he could reach. Sometimes he bore a cheſt upon his ſhoulders, which anxiety alone enabled him to carry; now he tottered under heavy bundles of linen; and again, to recover himſelf, ſtood at the well to ſupply water. The flames continued to rage, the fire gained ground, thoſe who endeavoured to extinguiſh it ſhouted, the unfortunate proprietors lamented their fate, and the fire-bell rang.

A piercing cry ſuddenly burſt through the dreadful noiſe, and ſtruck William's ear. He made his way to the place from which the voice of woe proceeded, and ſaw a young woman rolling herſelf on

the ground in the agonies of despair. She had been in the fields at work when the fire broke out; she ran breathless to the spot, and found her cottage in flames. She had left a sucking infant in the cradle, and a boy of eight years old to watch his little sister. Neither of them was any where to be found; the flames prevented all access to the cottage, and the roof every moment threatened to fall in.

The woman lay on the ground, tearing her hair, and uttering such bitter cries as cut the hearts of the by-standers. "My children! my children! —My Antony! my little Babet!"— William could not sustain this cruel spectacle. Without consideration—for the smallest reflection would, on the present occasion, have deterred him from the rash deed—he plunged into the flames.

The spectators shuddered—the mother raised herself on her knees, and

stretched

ſtretched her hands to heaven in the attitude of prayer.—She could not ſpeak —ſhe only cried, and God heard her cries!—With the ſcreaming boy in one hand, and the ſleeping babe in the other, their deliverer returned in half a minute, and, almoſt ſuffocated with duſt and ſmoke, dropped ſenſeleſs at the feet of the weeping mother.

Her joy expreſſed itſelf in the wildeſt tranſports. She preſſed the children warmly to her breaſt—laughed, wept, and prayed—crept to William, kiſſed his feet, bathed him in tears, bleſſed him!—Then ſhe raiſed the little ſuckling to Heaven, and ordered the boy to fold his hands, and pray for his benefactor. The old men ſtood round—tears hung on their grey eye-laſhes; they pulled off their caps when William again opened his eyes, and gazed at him with reſpect as a ſuperior being.

The flames were at laſt extinguiſhed;

no lives were loſt ; William was the only perſon who had ſuſtained much injury, and lay unable to crawl home. "Generous ſtranger," ſaid the woman, "willingly would I carry you to my cottage, but I have none to offer you !"—"Come to mine, come to mine," cried an hundred voices. They contended for the honour of entertaining the ſtranger, who had ſo magnanimouſly riſked his life. An old man at laſt obtained the preference, becauſe his houſe was neareſt. William was removed to it with the utmoſt tenderneſs, and every thing was provided that could contribute to remove the pain, or conduce to his refreſhment.

The grateful woman watched all the firſt night beſide him. She ſat with the babe at her breaſt by his bed-ſide, and offered ſecret prayers to Heaven for his recovery. They had applied to his wound a ſalve compoſed of olive oil and

ſweet cream, mixed with ſome white lead, a remedy which ſo greatly aſſuaged the pain, that about midnight he fell aſleep, and next morning when the day was well advanced he awoke, greatly ſtrengthened and refreſhed.

To what delightful ſenſations does he awake, whoſe firſt reflections are on the good action he performed the day before! Delightful ſenſations!—The happy mother ſat before him, and ſmiled with ineffable benignity. She held out to him the little Babet, as if ſhe would have ſaid: "See there that lovely innocent; to thee ſhe owes her life!" The dear name of Babet awakened in his mind a train of agreeable ideas, which perhaps yeſterday, when the mother expreſſed her agoniſing grief, had unconſciouſly aſſiſted to impel him to the raſh attempt.

He now learned that the huſband and

brother of the young woman ſerved in the national guard; that they had lately been ordered on an expedition, from which they were daily expected to return; and that, reduced to poverty by the conflagration, they would feel nothing ſo poignantly as their inability to teſtify their gratitude.

William was ſo unweariedly tended with the moſt anxious care, that in a few days he was in a ſituation to quit the houſe of his benevolent hoſt. He was followed with bleſſings from every quarter. The young woman accompanied him out of the village; and when he was about to leave her, ſhe attempted to kiſs his hand. She entreated him with tears not to forget her, but as often as his walks were in this direction to call at her houſe, and taſte the joys of the noble action he had performed.

He promiſed to viſit her again, ſhook her

her heartily by the hand, and, accompanied by the delightful feeling of having been the benefactor of an honest family, which he considered recompense enough, he walked light and cheerily home.

CHAP. XIII.

THE PASSPORT.

WHILE all this was paſſing upon the agitated theatre of French liberty, Nature had ſet free a little captive, who had long been expected with anxiety. Jeanette was delivered of a boy—lovely as a May-day would I ſay, were all May-days lovely. To uſe a compariſon more preciſe, the little William was lovely as every mother conſiders her firſt-born ſon. Jeanette, as is uſual with mothers, thought him very ſenſible at the end of fourteen days. She alone ſaw him laugh, ſhe alone ſaw in his ſcarce viſible noſe the counter part of the hawk noſe of her huſband. She remarked that he already knew her, that he ſtretched out his hands to her—In a word, the boy was juſt ſuch a prodigy as the whole world

world is peopled with, if we are to believe what mothers tell us.

Poor Jeanette's joy at the birth of her boy was greatly embittered by the intelligence of William's captivity. It was ſome conſolation to her, indeed, that his life was no longer expoſed to the ſwords and bullets of the enemy, and that ſhe might now hear or read of battles without trembling. But yet was not her beloved expoſed to a thouſand dangers, which perhaps it might be more difficult to parry than the grenadier's bayonet in the open field?—Did he not live in a country where vague ſuſpicion paſſed for convicted guilt, and where the people at once pronounced and executed the ſentence?—But, ſhould his prudence and diſcretion elude the ever-wakeful jealouſy of his foes, might he not be ſick?—A new climate, anxiety, *ennui*, every thing which can affect the health, may lay him on a ſick-

bed,

bed, and who then is to care for him ?—who watch and tend him ?—who give him his medicines at the proper moment ?—Paid hirelings! who with pleafure would fee him die, in order to rob the deceafed ftranger!—Has he not a wife whom love and duty call to his aid? —The journey is dangerous, but do love and duty fhrink from any difficulties ?—The journey is attended with many obftacles and hardfhips, but is love acquainted with trifles like thefe ?—Did William weigh all thefe confiderations when he came from the camp to Munfter ?—But the mother muft leave her new-born child—Alas! that indeed is the hardeft condition of all!—The little fweet creature is fo infinitely dear to her! almoft as dear as his father!—Her heart is diftracted, but at length decides for him—him who by his unbounded love has acquired a right to every facrifice.

Jeanette made every arrangement which maternal anxiety could ſuggeſt for the moſt careful treatment of her child. She committed him to the ſuperintendance of a clergyman's widow, who was her friend and neighbour. She left him in the hands of a nurſe, an honeſt country woman, who loved the boy as her own child. The moment of ſeparation was dreadful, but ſhe tore herſelf away, and obeyed the dictates of the moſt ſacred duty. Accompanied only by the faithful Peter, ſhe ſet out on her journey, and arrived ſafe at Paris, at this period the theatre of Robeſpierre's enormities.

She had taken the precaution to feign herſelf poor, and Peter appeared a perfect *ſans culotte.* She accordingly enjoyed the moſt enviable advantage which could be poſſeſſed at this moment, that of remaining unnoticed.—Hitherto a guardian angel ſeemed to have guided her ſteps, but no difficulties increaſed

upon

upon her which it was difficult for a helplefs woman to furmount. She remained feveral weeks in Paris before fhe could learn to whom fhe ought to apply for a paffport, to carry her fafe through the interior of France. She was fent from one office to another, and no where was fhe treated with the refpect due to her fex. Here a taylor gave himfelf airs, there fhe was expofed to the vulgar jefts of a peruke-maker, dreffed out with the tri-coloured cockade; here was fhe hooted by a fecretary, and there impofed upon by a clerk. Thofe who treated her beft, advifed her not to excite fufpicion by too much importunity, and bade her be patient till to-morrow.

Judge of the fituation of a poor helplefs woman, who alone in the midft of this huge Golgotha, unacquainted with the dangers by which fhe was furrounded, trod every moment on the brink of a precipice, knew nothing of the forms it

was neceſſary to obſerve, and among a million of pretended philanthropiſts, could not find a ſingle good man, who ſhowed a real principle of humanity and friendſhip. Think of the miſery of a woman who longed, with the moſt glowing impatience, to be again united to her huſband, who every morning left her lodgings with renewed hopes that now ſhe ſhould attain the object and reward of her fond perſeverance, when ſhe returned home again in the evening weary and forlorn. Thus did ſeveral weeks elapſe, and the ſickneſs of hope diſappointed began at length to give place to deſpair.

One morning, when ſhe had wandered from ſtreet to ſtreet, and from office to office, and had every where in vain ſought humanity under the red cap, exhauſted with fatigue, ſhe loſt herſelf in the garden of the *Thuilleries*, ſunk down upon

a bench.

a bench, and, without regarding the company paffing by, bitterly wept her fate. Many ftopped and gazed at her a moment. Many, accuftomed to the daily fpectacle of mifery, paffed carelefly along. Nobody afked: "Poor woman, what is the matter with you?"

A beautiful woman, elegantly dreffed in the Grecian ftyle, now came down one of the walks. Jeanette did not obferve her. The lady obferved Jeanette with fympathy, did not ftop indeed, but frequently looked back. After paffing on a little fhe returned, repaffed the mourner, and whifpered: "Do not weep, my child! To fhed tears is a crime here!"

Jeanette looked up.—Scarce had fhe time to obferve the benignant profile of the lovely ftranger; but the features were fo blended with humanity and kindnefs, that they inftantly infpired the

poor

poor outcast with confidence. She started up, followed the lady, and eagerly exclaimed: "Ah! madam, pity a poor helpless stranger!"

The angelic creature turned timorously round, and said eagerly: "Not here! not here!—Come in the evening to the *Rue St. Honoré*, and enquire at number 27, for *Theresa Cabarrus**.

She disappeared, but her words remained deep in Jeanette's memory. With impatience she expected the evening; hope lent her wings; with serene confidence she appeared before the amiable Theresa.

"Forgive me, madam," said the gentle creature, "forgive me for seeming this morning to treat you with harshness; but you know not how dangerous it is in this place to show compassion for the unfortunate. Here we are alone.

* The present madame Tallien.

Impart to me your diſtreſs. Your figure, and the expreſſion of grief on your countenance, have inſpired me with the wiſh to be of ſervice to you. I have a little influence. Speak freely."

Alas! ſuch accents! ſuch kind attentive goodneſs were now ſtrange to Jeanette's ear and heart. She burſt into tears, but they were tears of melancholy pleaſure. The artleſs narrative of her ſimple tale affected Thereſa. She detained the amiable wife, to whom ſhe felt herſelf attracted, to ſupper, and ſat down to write a note. She then entertained her gueſt with the moſt unconſtrained cheerfulneſs, and carefully avoided touching upon any chord which did not ſound in uniſon with innocent gaiety. Jeanette, animated with new hopes, forgot the ſorrows by which ſhe was oppreſſed. What Thereſa ſaid was ſo kind and ſo elegantly expreſſed, that even a woman was compelled to yield her whole attention.

attention. The few hours which elapsed till supper flew rapidly and pleasantly away. They sat down to table—and when Jeanette lifted her cover she found a passport in the plate.

CHAP. XIV.

THE MAYOR.

THE happy pilgrim breathed ſilent bleſſings over her guardian angel when ſhe ſaw the barrier of Paris ſhut behind her. Engroſſed with delightful contemplations ſhe lolled in the corner of her chaiſe. The moſt enchanting landſcapes paſſed unnoticed. She never ſtopped at any ſtage. Twenty times a day indeed was Jeanette obliged to ſhow her paſſport; but it was immediately returned to her with ſulky looks, becauſe the moſt dexterous inquiſitor could find no error in it.

The anxious wife, haſtening to her beloved huſband, allowed herſelf neither repoſe nor refreſhment; the third day had dawned, when a reſtleſs ſlumber overpowered her for a few moments. A

large

large town now presented itself to their view, where she resolved to stop till next morning, to recruit her exhausted strength.

As she entered the gate she heard a noise in the neighbouring streets, to which at first she paid no attention. When she came near the market-place, however, she saw an immense crowd of people, who flocked together from all quarters. She was now alarmed; for all she had read and heard of the wild ebullitions of popular fury suddenly recurred to her mind.

Alas! in a luckless hour she had entered within the walls of this town. It would be superfluous to relate how the tumult arose. The people resemble the sand in the desert, which at first is whirled round by the gentle breeze in little volumes, is by degrees agitated deeper and deeper, till it swells into a sweeping torrent, which overwhelms every thing it

meets, tears the trees up by the roots, and buries men and houses in destruction.

Some Jacobin had been preaching up the plundering system of an equal division of property, and collected the journeymen, and porters, and servants, by the force of their arms to carry it into effect. The enfuriated people assembled in crowds to murder a score of rich people, and share their inheritance under the banner of liberty.

When Jeanette entered the town, the people were entertaining themselves with that spectacle with which they had so often been glutted since the 9th Thermidor, that of bloody heads carried in procession upon pikes. The carriage was suddenly caught in the crowd, and could move neither backward nor forward. Jeanette trembled and grew pale when she perceived the frantic rabble, who, instead of the former images of

faints and confecrated banners, carried in triumph the bloody enfigns of human heads which they had cut off.

Peter fat on the coach-box, and gazed with open mouth and looks of horror. The lofty box made the poor fellow, againft his will, a prominent object. When the fanguinary rout came up, one of the ftandard-bearers thought proper to practife the cruel jeft of clapping the goary head to Peter's nofe, and infifted on his kiffing it. As Peter did not underftand a word of French, and therefore did not know what they required him to do, the natural difguft which fuch a fpectacle infpired, taught him to turn away the bloody head with both his hands. But the greater reluctance he expreffed, and the more he protefted, in German, againft this violence, the more obftinate the people became, and with frantic fhouts infifted that he fhould obey.

Jeanette dropped down fenfelefs. Her

faithful ſervant was torn from the box, kicked and abuſed in the moſt cruel manner. Peter muſt have fallen a ſacrifice to their fury, if the attention of the miſcreants had not been withdrawn from the footman to his miſtreſs in the carriage. " This way, brothers!" cried one of them in a brutal tone, " here is an Auſtrian lady, who cannot ſtand the ſight of royaliſt blood." They broke open the carriage, pulled out the unconſcious victim, ſearched her pockets, plundered her of her money, took her paſſport, tore it to pieces, and ſcattered it in the air.

Already a thouſand voices thundered her doom, and a ſavage monſter, with an ax in his hand, offered to undertake the office of her executioner. Moſt ſeaſonably, at this moment, a young man, of a genteel appearance, followed by a detachment of the national guard, made his way through the crowd, and, in the

name of the law, enjoined tranquillity. This command, enforced by threatening bayonets, procured reſpect, and reſcued the victim. The people diſperſed with murmurs.

When Jeanette opened her eyes, ſhe found herſelf, ſurrounded by ſoldiers, in the arms of a young man, who gazed at her with complacency. He announced himſelf as the mayor of the town, and ſo politely congratulated himſelf on his good fortune in being her deliverer, that Jeanette immediately recogniſed him to be an elegant, accompliſhed man.— “Take courage, madam,” ſaid he with reſpectful intereſt, “the danger is over. Have the goodneſs to allow me to conduct you to my houſe. My wife and I will do every thing in our power to give you a better opinion of our town.”

The mention of a wife redoubled Jeanette's confidence; ſhe accepted his offer with thanks; he aſſiſted her into the

the carriage, which the guard ſurrounded, and he himſelf followed on foot. Poor Peter was ſo beaten and bruiſed, that he was not able to mount the coach-box, but was obliged to be led by two grenadiers. He had, at laſt, found out what they wiſhed him to do, and in whimpering voice curſed the horrible propoſal. "Were there never," ſaid he to his conductors, "another woman for me in the world but here, and were ſhe the faireſt that ever was ſeen, I ſhould not come for her to your country, and be forced to kiſs bloody heads." The ſoldiers looked at him and laughed, for they did not underſtand what he ſaid.—Every body knows, but the circumſtance has never been explained, even by Kant, that an ignorant man always laughs when he does not underſtand a thing.—The mayor's lady welcomed the ſtranger with polite hoſpitality. She was uſhered into an elegant apartment, which was

furniſhed

furniſhed with every conveniency; the table was covered with all kinds of refreſhments. They preſſed her earneſtly to partake of them; but when ſhe aſſured them that ſhe wanted nothing but repoſe, they politely withdrew and left her alone.

Her firſt care was to thank God on her knees for her deliverance. She threw herſelf on the bed, which was adorned with ſilken curtains, that formed an agreeable ſhade. She fell aſleep, and did not awake till the evening, greatly refreſhed. Scarcely had a little noiſe ſhe made announced that ſhe was awakê, when the miſtreſs of the houſe drew aſide the curtains, kindly enquired how ſhe did, and invited her to ſupper in the family circle.

Jeanette appeared in the full ſplendour of youthful beauty. The roſes which terror had chaſed from her cheeks, bloomed afreſh. Refreſhing ſleep, and

a delightful dream of having met with her husband, had kindled a delicate fire in her eye. Every body complimented her, all pressed round her, every one endeavoured to say something civil, and Beaublanc himself (for that was the mayor's name) distinguished himself by his assiduity, conversed with her in the most agreeable manner, and strove to anticipate her most trivial wishes.

Jeanette would have forgot herself in this pleasing society, if her anxiety to see William had not been much more powerful than the charms of any kind of amusement. Immediately after supper she entreated her deliverer to send for post horses, as she wished to pursue her journey, even by night. Her request seemed to throw him into some confusion. He represented to her the necessity of repose; he called a physician, who happened to be in company, to give weight to his remonstrance; and when nothing

nothing could ſhake the impatience of the anxious wife to be gone, he exaggerated the dangers to which ſhe expoſed herſelf, as the people ſtill ſwarmed diſorderly round the houſe; he promiſed her next day to take precautions for her ſafety. All was in vain. Jeanette perſevered in her reſolution to ſet off immediately.

Beaublanc at laſt was obliged to acquieſce, and begged to ſee her paſſport, which his duty required him to examine. Jeanette haſtily put her hand in her pocket—but how great was her terror when ſhe found neither paſſport nor money, and was obliged to bring out her hand empty!—"Ah! God!" exclaimed ſhe, turning pale as aſhes—"Ah! God!"—She could ſay no more—her knees ſhook, and ſhe was forced to ſit down.

The mayor ſeemed to receive the news of this unfortunate accident with

feigned concern, and a secret joy was painted in his countenance. He comforted her with the utmost kindness, and promised to write immediately to Paris, giving a faithful statement of the accident, and immediately procure her a new passport. He assured her likewise that she need not be under any uneasiness respecting money, for he should consider himself happy in being permitted to lend her. He entreated her, during the short delay, to consider his house as her own, and in the mean time to announce to her husband her speedy arrival.

She listened to all he said in silent stupor, and could only express her thanks in broken sentences. The proposals, indeed, were the most agreeable which, in her situation, could be made; and since fortune had resolved to make her the object of its caprice, it was happy that she had found a house where she could

remain with comfort and with reſpectability, and await a more favourable turn of her affairs. She yielded, therefore, to the neceſſity of circumſtances, and with tears entreated the mayor to haſten his proffered aſſiſtance.

He repeated the conſolatory aſſurance, promiſed this very evening to diſpatch a courier to Paris, and in the mean time enjoined his domeſtics to do every thing to render the agreeable ſtranger as happy as her ſituation would admit. "My example," added he, "will teach you how to conduct yourſelves."

Alas! this laſt was the only point in which he kept his word. Beaublanc belonged to that claſs of good weak men who are irreſiſtibly attracted by new charms. He was married to an amiable woman, with whom before his marriage he had carried on a long and romantic courtſhip, and encountered a thouſand obſtacles before he attained the object of

his wiſhes. He loved her ſtill, his heart was hers, but his licentiouſneſs ſhe was not able to reſtrain. Many a tear ſhe wept in ſecret; ſometimes a tender reproach eſcaped her, which the young man felt indeed, but it produced no other effect but to render him more guarded in his intrigues, and more ſecret in his infidelities. When he was detected, he threw himſelf at her feet, claſped her knees, wept, entreated, called himſelf a wretched licentious profligate, and could not conceive, when he poſſeſſed ſo amiable a wife, how he could have any taſte for other charms. In a word, he never ceaſed till ſhe tenderly forgave him.

After theſe occaſions ſucceeded an interval of domeſtic happineſs for two or three months, during which, his wife was ſatisfied with his conduct, and he was ſatisfied with himſelf; for after ſuch occurrences he ſeriouſly endeavoured to

correct his bad habits, but all his resolution vanished if a new beauty fell in his way. In a word, he resembled a needle, which turns steadily to its pole so long as it is not attracted by some new and more powerful magnet.

Jeanette's appearance happened just in one of these intervals of domestic tranquillity, during which Beaublanc had been the best husband in the world, and when he had solemnly promised after his last error never to wander again. Who could have suspected that he should thus accidentally meet with a woman like Jeanette? who seemed as if formed by an adverse fate on purpose to triumph over his firmest resolutions. When he rescued her from the fury of the populace; when she lay senseless in his arms, and her half-covered bosom beat against his; when her lily cheeks touched his, and his mouth received the first breath which re-animated her lips—ah!

his

his heart was gone!—His attention, his hofpitality, his humane exertions fprang from a fource which his experienced wife eafily difcovered. Thofe fufpicions which had been but too often juftified awaked. She trembled, and concealed her apprehenfion, too patient to cry Fire on perceiving the firft fparks, and too generous to revenge the inconftancy of her hufband upon an innocent ftranger.

During the firft day fhe confoled herfelf in the expectation of the fpeedy departure of her gueft; but when the difagreeable accident of the lofs of the paffport was mentioned, when fhe difcovered the fecret joy of her hufband, and faw herfelf compelled to entertain fo dangerous a rival in the houfe for feveral weeks, her only hope was in the character of the ftranger, whofe dignified manners and modeft referve infpired her with confidence that the licentious views of her hufband would here be difappointed.

She was not miſtaken. It was ſome time before Jeanette perceived the unwelcome triumph of her charms; and when ſhe could no longer doubt the fact, it cauſed her the moſt cruel vexation. Her ſituation became more painful than ever. What could ſhe now do?—Was ſhe to teaſe with importunities the man who had ſaved her life, and given her a ſecure aſylum in his houſe?—But he had not yet made any expreſs declaration of his paſſion. His looks only ſpoke what he felt; a thouſand little attentions betrayed the ſtate of his heart. It was poſſible that he ſtruggled with himſelf, that he endeavoured to extinguiſh his riſing attachment, and in this caſe he deſerved pity rather than reproach. How happy would ſhe have been to have aided his ſtruggling virtue by a ſudden flight! but whither could ſhe fly, without money, and without a paſſport?

Should ſhe confide the ſecret to her

kind hoſteſs? Ought ſhe to awaken the jealouſy of an unſuſpecting wife; and, as a reward for her ſiſterly attention, plant a dagger in her heart? No! She rather choſe to be ſilent, to conceal her anguiſh, to throw a veil over her grief, and reſolved as much as poſſible to avoid the company of Beaublanc, and to wait the arrival of her paſſport in ſolitude, which ſhe took every opportunity to indulge. She contrived many pretexts for ſpending the forenoon in her own apartment. In the afternoon ſhe was going to write to William, or a head-ache furniſhed her with an apology, or ſhe walked with her hoſteſs in the garden. Often too unwelcome gueſts detained the mayor, ſo that he found but little opportunity to enjoy the company of his new love.

The conduct which Jeanette obſerved was indeed perfectly well calculated to keep Beaublanc at a diſtance; but it

could

could have little effect in repreffing his paffion, fince perpetual obftacles only inflamed him the more, and drove him to defpair. The more his wife felt herfelf indebted to the delicate and difcreet conduct of the generous ftranger, the more expedients did Beaublanc contrive to prolong Jeanette's ftay, in the hope that a favourable opportunity would at laft lead to the accomplifhment of his wifhes.

For the attainment of his object he was not very fcrupulous about the means he employed. A month had elapfed, the new paffport had really arrived, but Beaublanc concealed it. During this period Jeanette had written eight letters to her hufband; but Beaublanc had fupprefled them, and his jealoufy delighted to obferve the anguifh of the wife, who confidered William's filence as an ill prefage. He himfelf undertook to make enquiries in the place where William refided,

fided, but only to communicate to her equivocal intelligence. Sometimes he gave the anxious wife reafon to fufpect the death of her hufband; fometimes he told her of a prifoner of war anfwering his defcription who had married a rich heirefs.

With regard to the paffport, it was eafier to miflead her unfufpecting confidence; for what could be more natural than in the revolutionary confufion which now prevailed in Paris that fuch a trifle fhould be forgotten?—A letter to Therefa remained unanfwered. Therefa and William were filent precifely for the fame reafon.

The poor forlorn Jeanette, feparated from all fhe loved and honoured, trembling for the life of her hufband, of her child, wept bitter tears in fecret. As Beaublanc had now completely laid afide the mafk, as he became more preffing, and did not hefitate even to offend her

tender

tender ear with his ardent paſſion, her ſorrows reached the higheſt pitch.

She endeavoured by raillery and remonſtrance, by ſeverity and by mildneſs, to recall him to the path of reaſon and of duty, but in vain. He remained unmoved by her tears, deaf to her repreſentations, and callous to the ſilent grief of his wife. He was at no pains to conceal the hope that William might be dead. He laboured to render her familiar with this frightful idea. He inſinuated how eaſy it would be for him, according to the preſent marriage code of France, to procure a ſeparation from his wife. He dropped hints of his wealth, his conſequence, the ſplendid life which he could enable a wife whom he loved to enjoy. In a word, he left no arts unemployed which could ſhake Jeanette's conjugal fidelity. Her paſſions he likewiſe endeavoured to engage by the diſplay of an elegant figure, which

was animated and adorned by the glow of love; and he exerted himſelf to give it new charms by the moſt taſteful diſplay of dreſs.

It is unneceſſary to aſſure the reader that all his arts were baffled, and fell harmleſs from Jeanette's heart, like a blunt arrow from a mail of ſteel. Not a foul drop ever mingled in the pure fountain of her feelings. Never once did her vanity liſten with complacency to his paſſion, and even the certainty of William's death would have produced no alteration in her ſentiments. But this did not at all contribute to render her ſituation leſs wretched. She was dependant upon a man who laboured to obtain his criminal object at every riſk; who, as appeared, did not even ſhrink from the commiſſion of a crime if it promiſed to conduct him to his wiſhes; for he had now gone ſo far as to throw out menaces, and to drop hints at which her virtue

trembled.

trembled. And if indeed his uncontrouled paſſion ſhould prompt him to acts of violence—alas! what guardian divinity would then protect the helpleſs Jeanette!

CHAP. XV.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL PRIEST.

HAPPY for thee, William, that you never fufpected the forrows to which thy poor Jeanette was doomed! You imagined that your faithful wife was fafe at home with the dear boy at her breaft. You faw her in imagination fitting with maternal fondnefs by the cradle of her fon, and you thought that anxiety alone for his father could fometimes dafh a drop of melancholy into this cup of joy. Letters full of delightful hope you wrote her every week, which would contribute to moderate that anxiety. Poor eafy William! fhe received them not.

That man fhould be fo fhort fighted! that hills and valleys fhould interpofe between the forrows of the miftrefs and the fympathy of the lover; that perhaps

a mother,

a mother, a wife languishes in want and misery, while the son or husband walks abroad unconscious and unconcerned; that two souls closely united in congenial sentiments should never, when separated by the smallest distance, discover by some slight anxiety or secret horror the sufferings in which the lover or the friend is involved!—Alas! shall I say that *it is well, or that it is ill for man that it should be thus ordered?*

After Babet disappeared, and his friend was torn from him, William's most delightful dreams now hung undivided upon his native land, on his beloved Jeanette, the object of his most ardent wishes. Engrossed with these contemplations, he strolled in harvest through the fading flowers; or, when the bustle of industry offered him unwelcome amusement, he plunged into the shady recesses of a wood, or stole among the bulrushes which skirted a murmuring brook. The

hope

hope of again finding Babet daily decreafed, like the bank which the ftream every moment wafhes and fweeps away.

One day the morning had iffued from the chambers of the eaft wrapped in a veil of thick mifts, but the fun had withdrawn the clouds from the face of day, as a youthful hufband by his careffes prevails upon his wife to lay afide her veil—William ftood earlier than ufual upon a little hillock near the town, funk in meditations, which the landfcape around and the view of the flitting clouds had infpired. He thought of the birth of man, and the firft dawn of life; how often the cradle of a king is adorned by the beams of morn, while before 'tis noon the throne is involved in clouds and tempefts; how often darknefs and mifts cover the poor man's cradle, while the caprice of fortune prepares for the obfcure child a ferene and joyful evening. His own example recurred to his mind, and

with the laſt traces of the parting clouds his gratitude mounted up to heaven.

The temper of his ſoul was now ſo ſublimated that it ſought for kindred objects, and he therefore reſolved this day to aſcend to the top of a hill, which he had long marked out as the boundary of his excurſions. The way to it was through the village, the inhabitants of which, ſince the conflagration, loved him with brotherly affection. He wiſhed to paſs on unobſerved; but the little boy he had ſaved came running after him, and, pulling him by the coat, ſaid: "Mother is coming too; ſhe cannot run ſo faſt." William ſtopped, and waited till the young woman came up with the moſt cordial expreſſions of joy, and held out to him her ſmiling infant. She kindly complained that he had quite forgot her; the boy had daily aſked for him, and ſhe had been much grieved at his abſence. A thouſand

 times

times ſhe had thanked God for the deliverance of her children, but ſhe had lamented that ſhe had not an opportunity to expreſs her gratitude to the angel whom God had ſent. She then informed him that ſhe now lived in the houſe of her father-in-law till her cottage was rebuilt, and begged him to be ſo good as come and partake of a rural breakfaſt. She was ſo preſſing, ſhe ſo eagerly wiſhed in this way to ſhow her kindneſs, that it was impoſſible for him to refuſe.

He was conducted to a neat, clean houſe, where he was cordially received by an old man with ſilver grey locks. Every body was employed in the houſe; they ran backwards and forwards, ſought the whiteſt cloth, the cleareſt glaſſes, the fineſt plates. They brought out honey, butter, milk, and fruits; and every eye ſparkled with joy when the welcome gueſt ſeemed to eat with appetite. They

appeared

appeared delighted that their efforts had ſucceeded in pleaſing their benefactor.

The young woman told him that during his abſence her huſband and brother had been at home, and heard of his noble deed, and both of them intended to come to town to thank him, but the calls of ſervice prevented them. "Yeſterday," added the weeping wife, "they were ſent off in ſearch of ariſtocrats, and God knows when they will return."

At the lateſt, however, ſhe hoped they would be home on Saturday, and William was obliged to promiſe ſolemnly to repeat his viſit next Sunday. After he had ate and drank a great deal from pure complaiſance, he told the good people his intention to walk to the top of the hill, which began gradually to aſcend juſt at the back of the village. He enquired which road he ought to take. They told him it was ſeveral miles to the top; firſt, he muſt croſs a

 bridge,

bridge, then he would come to a ſheep-cot, then he muſt quit the road, and aſcend by the left-hand way. The aſcent was ſteep and difficult. They adviſed him to provide himſelf with refreſhments, and inſiſted on filling his pockets with fruit. William, however, refuſed, as he wiſhed to be as light as poſſible; and ſaid, if neceſſary, that he ſhould find milk at the ſheep-cot to which he was directed. The young woman, however, repreſented the inhabitants to be rough, unobliging people, and deſired him to obſerve a ſmall houſe not far from the ſheep-cot. "There," ſaid ſhe, "lives our conſtitutional prieſt, a good, kind-hearted man; call there if you want refreſhment. He receives every body with welcome."

William thanked her, and went away with the reſolution to call no where unleſs he was compelled by ſome unforeſeen accident. He eaſily found the road

which

which had been pointed out to him, lay on the top of the hill, and enjoyed the delightful proſpect into the fertile valley below, through which the river rolled along in a thouſand meanders. He traced out Babet's deſerted habitation, the ſight of which baniſhed the ſerenity of his ſoul. He reſolved to look at it no more, and his eyes ſtill recurred to it. The landſcape loſt its charms, he ſunk into a melancholy mood, and did not obſerve that twilight began to approach.

He ſtarted up. The ſhades of night already covered the valley. A grey ſtreak of the ſetting ſun ſtill glittered on the ſummits of the rocks. He haſtily deſcended the foot-path, and night thickened faſt round. Too much precipitation might lead him aſtray. He began, therefore, to walk more ſlowly, and to examine the path, ſince, if he loſt it, he muſt be compelled to paſs the cold harveſt night in the open air in this

ſolitude, which, after his late illneſs, might be attended with danger.

He was extremely happy, therefore, after wandering ſeveral hours through unbeaten tracks, to reach a fold belonging to the ſheep-cot. Recollecting the advice of his friends, however, he did not call, but directed his ſteps to the abode of the prieſt, whoſe white-waſhed walls glittered through the ſhade at the diſtance of a few hundred paces. Here he reſolved to beg a night's lodging, as it began to rain, and the darkneſs became every moment thicker.

As no light appeared through the windows, he began to fear that there was nobody at home, and was about to ring the bell, when the ſcreams of a female voice ſtruck his ear. The ſound ſeemed to proceed from a back houſe or cellar, and William diſtinctly heard the words "*Help! help!*"

He now pulled the bell with violence

ſeveral times. He endeavoured to open the houſe-door, but it was locked. He attempted to get over the wall round the court, but it was too high. The ſcreams ſtill continued, and cut him to the heart. He ran anxiouſly as faſt as he could round the whole place, hovering like a hen over a pond where her foſter duck-lings ſwim. He reached a garden fenced with a thick hedge. He was not deterred by the thorns, continued to make his way through, and haſtened to the place from which the cries proceeded.

He came to a back-door, which appeared but ill-ſecured; he ſtruck it with his foot, and it flew open. He entered, ſtumbled, and fell. An iron ſhovel lay in his way: he roſe, ſeized the ſhovel, for ſome obſcure feeling told him that here arms were neceſſary. The ſhrieks had changed into moans of lamentation; he followed the ſound, which ſoon brought him to the door of a room. It

was ſhut ; he thundered at it with his fiſt. A man's voice cried, "*Who is there?*"

"Open," cried William.—They refuſed.—"Open, or I will break open the door!"—They ſtill refuſed. William threw himſelf with all his force againſt the door, and drove it from its hinges. At this moment the light in the room was extinguiſhed, and William received a violent blow on the ſhoulder, which probably was aimed at his head. He eaſily could diſcern the figure that had ſtruck the blow. He lifted up his ſhovel, and ſtruck ſo violent a blow at the ſhadow, that the latter cried, "Jeſu Maria!" and dropped to the ground.

At the ſame time another figure ſlipped paſt him out at the door. He now remained thunderſtruck in this extraordinary ſituation ; here at his feet a man whom probably he had mortally wounded ; a few ſteps from him a low voice

of

of lamentation continued to moan; utter darkneſs prevailed, and the whole houſe was utterly unknown. He groped round the place from which the ſound proceeded, ſtruck againſt a bed, and found a perſon whom by the dreſs he ſuppoſed to be a lady.

"Who is here?" ſaid he. Groans were the only anſwer. He was almoſt inclined to join in uniſon with theſe groans, for the pain in his ſhoulder was very violent. Without light, however, he could neither aſſiſt himſelf nor others. But where was he to find it?—Where was the kitchen, in which, perhaps, the fire was ſtill alive in the embers? He went out, groped along the wall, creeped through the whole houſe, ſometimes found the doors open, ſometimes ſhut, but no where what he ſought. He now was unable to find the way back to the myſterious chamber, and had reſolved to

wait on the ſtair till morning, when he heard keys turning, and a door fling open with great noiſe. A number of voices ſounded through the paſſage, and a gleam of light was ſeen at a diſtance.

Conſcious of his innocence, he went fearleſs to meet the party, and found a number of half-naked peaſants, who, armed with all kinds of weapons, preſſed in, led by an ugly old woman with a lanthorn.—" There is the robber," cried the woman when ſhe ſaw William. He had thrown down the ſhovel; the peaſants ſeized him quite defenceleſs, and tied his hands behind his back.

In vain he proteſted his innocence, in vain he attempted to relate the accident which had brought him to the houſe; the old beldame bore him down. " He meant to rob my good maſter, your worthy paſtor!" cried ſhe with ſhrill voice. " Who knows but he may have already

already murdered him? His niece the villain firſt gagged; by God's mercy I contrived to eſcape in the dark."

The accuſation was ſo monſtrous, that William was amazed, and viewed the woman with looks of contempt. She ran on before with the lanthorn, the crowd followed with William bound in the middle. They entered the room—William looked round, and was confounded.—On the bed lay a beautiful young lady gagged with a handkerchief—It was *Babet!*—On the ground lay weltering in his blood a thick-headed prieſt—It was *Jeanette's raviſher!*

CHAP. XVI.

A CRITICAL SITUATION.

NATURE is ſo fruitful in ſurpriſing incidents, that the moſt creative imagination cannot ſurpaſs her works. The reader ſhould not, therefore, pronounce this hiſtory improbable becauſe it is ſurpriſing. We live in times when it would be matter of no great wonder to ſee the Emperor of China, like Dionyſius of old, turn ſchoolmaſter. Why then ſhould we wonder to find a prieſt in his vocation? But he was a convicted child-murderer!—Why, what then?—When the innocent and virtuous La Fayette languiſhes in a dungeon, is it matter of ſurpriſe that an infamous miſcreant ſhould be at large? As long as the former is found not improbable, the latter muſt be allowed to paſs for very natural.

natural.—The whole affair too hangs ſo ſimply together, that it is very eaſy to ſolve the myſtery.

The prieſt, as the reader will remember, in the firſt volume of this hiſtory, was withdrawn from the civil power, and ſhut up in a cloiſter. This, however, was done only *pro forma*, to remove him from the view of the good believers, who might have taken offence at his little miſchievous tricks. His more tolerant brethren took no offence at the matter, but chaſtiſed him as the Spartans uſed to chaſtiſe a boy who happened to ſteal clumſily. After a ſhort confinement, they gave him money for his expences, and ſent him about his buſineſs. He choſe France as the place of his retreat, where, according to the ſpirit of the prieſthood, he took a ſhare in every thing, accommodated himſelf to the ſpirit of the time, practiſed the eaſy art of ingratiating himſelf with the people, was one

one of the firft who, without fcruple, took the famous conftitutional oath, recommended himfelf to the people in power, and, in the moft natural way imaginable, infinuated himfelf into the confidence of an unfufpecting congregation, who chofe him their paftor, and fettled upon him a confiderable income and a comfortable houfe, from which a worthy old man, whofe confcience revolted from the oath, was driven naked and helplefs.

Here he played his part with more prudence and fuccefs than in Germany. He took into his houfe an old procurefs, who, in better times, had refided in the capital, and had been the confidante of feveral diftinguifhed characters. The fall of the great had likewife involved her fortunes, as the ftorm which levels the oak deftroys the cobwebs among its leaves. She left the country, was almoft ftarved; fhe returned, narrowly

escaped the guillotine, and saved herself by taking refuge under the wings of a constitutional priest. Here she again had an opportunity to exercise her talents; and she gave her protector so many proofs of them, that he dropped the design of marrying her which he had first conceived, and employed her hellish art in corrupting the innocence of the country girls, till Babet's charms captivated his foul passions.

That very day when William was attacked by the fever, and Babet expected her friend under the lime-tree on the lawn, accident brought the priest this way. He saw the lovely maid, as she lay carelessly on the bench, her head reclining on her snow-white hand, while her auburn locks waved round her bosom, and her elegant foot played in the sand. This was more than sufficient to inflame his passions. He approached, with that soft, simpering air which he had ever at command, as a courtier his

smile,

ſmile. "Thoſe mourning weeds," ſaid he, "tell me that you are in grief, and my office juſtifies me in intruding upon you with an offer of conſolation."

He ſat down beſide her, and talked to her a jargon for which we Germans ought to have a word, ſince the thing may likewiſe be found among the prieſts of our country. Babet, educated in a cloiſter, was accuſtomed to conſider theſe wolves in ſheep's clothing as a ſuperior claſs of beings. She received him with reſpect and confidence. She rejoiced once more to ſee a prieſt, whoſe conſoling converſation ſhe had been ſo long denied. She willingly gave him per miſſion to viſit her daily. She even begged him to come, and, on the very firſt interview, joyfully offered him one of her diamonds to ſay maſſes for the ſouls of her father and brother.

The prieſt ſoon found what an unſuſpicious creature chance had thrown in his way. The very next viſit he diſ-

covered

covered all Babet's ſecrets, of every kind; he learnt the flight of her brother, her attachment to William, the treaſure ſhe had concealed in the caſket; he diſcovered all, and bounded with joy, like Satan in Klopſtock's Meſſiah. Any attempt, indeed, to change Babet's childiſh confidence into love, was not very likely to ſucceed, as ſhe was much too innocent to underſtand what he meant. When he gazed at her with glowing paſſion, ſhe conſidered his ardour to be paternal kindneſs; and when he preſſed her hand, ſhe kiſſed his reſpectfully. To give her any opportunity of diſcovering the foul corruption of his heart was dangerous; her innocence might be alarmed, and ſhe might take offence.

Under pretence of placing her in ſafety, he propoſed to take her home to his houſe, as his niece. He repreſented to her the danger to which ſhe was daily expoſed in this ſolitary habitation;

the

the impropriety of a young lady, quite deſerted, living thus without protection. He then diſplayed the advantages of the undiſturbed tranquillity ſhe might enjoy at his houſe, the ſecurity with which ſhe could there, unknown and unperſecuted, indulge her grief, and perform the duties of devotion.

His arguments made an impreſſion upon Babet, but they were not attended with all the effect which he expected. The image of her friend was too deeply engraved upon her heart; ſhe muſt ſee him and conſult with him before ſhe finally adopted a reſolution by which they would be ſeparated. She did not, therefore, abſolutely refuſe the paternal offer of the prieſt, as ſhe called it, but poſtponed her deciſion till William's recovery.

Such a delay and ſuch conſultation were not conſiſtent with the prieſt's plan. He dreaded the return of this

dangerous prifoner, and faw the neceffity of accomplifhing his purpofe before the arrival of this friend oppofed a new obftacle to his fuccefs. One evening, therefore, when Babet informed him with joy, that fhe had received the moft favourable accounts of the convalefcence of her friend, and that fhe expected to fee him in a few days, he conceived a diabolical artifice for the completion of his defign. At midnight fomebody knocked at Babet's door: the maid went down, and received, from an unknown hand, a letter, which fhe carried to her miftrefs. It contained the following words, written in a hafty and fcarce legible manner:

"Deareft fifter! Fate, whofe hand lies heavy upon our houfe, is not yet weary of perfecuting me. Our frontiers are too clofely watched to allow me to efcape; our faithful fervant has been murdered, and I am a wretched fugitive.

Of what I took with me from my father's inheritance, I have partly been robbed, and part I have been obliged to fell, to fupport my wretched exiftence. Now defpair is my only companion, and death my only hope!—Yet I tremble to die by the hands of the executioner!—I languifh in this neighbourhood, but dare not venture to enter our manfion. I am purfued and traced, fpies watch for me in every quarter.—If you love your only brother, grant his laft wifh, to fee you once more before he falls under the fword of his perfecutors. To-morrow night, at twelve o'clock, a faithful confidante of mine will expect you at the gate.—If you have courage and love for me, follow her; fhe will bring you to the arms of your affectionate brother,

"PHILIP CHEVALIER DE BELLOY."

Babet trembled as fhe read this letter. Tears ftarted in her eyes, fifterly affec-

tion

tion glowed in her breaſt. Without the leaſt ſuſpicion ſhe inſtantly reſolved to truſt herſelf with the expected meſſenger, to put the caſket in her pocket, to give her unfortunate brother the half of its contents, and by her tender conſolation perhaps ſave him from ſelf-murder.

She had never ſeen the hand-writing of the Chevalier; but though ſhe had been acquainted with it, yet would not the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion have ariſen in her guileleſs heart. With anxious impatience ſhe waited the day, and, with tender anxiety, the night. The prieſt viſited her as uſual. He hoped ſhe would impart to him what had happened, and the reſolution ſhe had taken; but ſhe was ſilent. It was not *her own* ſecret, the care of her brother's ſafety ſealed her lips.

The cunning ſeducer, however, eaſily perceived that ſhe labour'd under the preſſure of ſecret anxiety, and in her

agitation

agitation he gueſſed the ſucceſs of his villainy. In the evening he went away with an air ſuch as the celebrated Catharine de Medicis might have aſſumed when, for the laſt time, ſhe viſited the unfortunate Coligni. He drew himſelf up ſquat in the middle of his net, like a malignant ſpider, to be ready to ſpring out on the harmleſs inſect for which he had ſpread it.

He was no ſooner gone than Babet began to pack up her caſket; and after a warm prayer to her guardian ſaints, in the obſcurity of night, accompanied by her faithful ſervant, ſhe tripped through the court, liſtened, till ſhe heard a ſlight noiſe and coughing at the gate. It was the procureſs we have mentioned, who, like a rattle-ſnake, opened her jaws to ſwallow the faſcinated bird.

Whither Babet thought ſhe followed, and to what place ſhe was really conducted, we already know.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

LOVE AND GRATITUDE.

As ſtarts with horror the youth who thinks he is about to kiſs the roſy lips of beauty, and ſuddenly beholds the cancerous cheek of corruption, ſo did Babet ſhudder, in wild diſmay, when ſhe ſaw the villain ſhe had begun to reſpect as a ſecond father, unmaſked at her feet. For the firſt two or three hours ſhe could neither ſpeak, ſigh, nor weep. She was firſt obliged to reflect on the poſſibility of ſuch a baſeneſs, before ſhe could complain or reproach. The prieſt was obliged to confeſs his ſhameleſs purpoſe before ſhe could comprehend what he meant. When ſhe underſtood his deſign, however, from impotent reſentment ſhe roſe, at once, to the height of unſpeakable contempt. Her innocence

wss ſo intimately blended with the whole of what conſtituted *herſelf*, that ſhe felt that it could be torn from her only with her life. This feeling inſpired her with a diſcretion and courage far beyond her years and her ſtrength. While the hours of night ſlowly glided by, ſhe remained obſtinately dumb, and not a motion of her eye betrayed the ſmalleſt intereſt in what paſſed around. She paid no attention either to the diſguſting talk of the prieſt, or the wretched conſolations of the procureſs. She ſat in a kind of trance till morning dawned. When it was day, and ſhe heard at a little diſtance the ſhepherd's pipe, ſhe ſuddenly ſtarted up, ran to the window, threw it open, and cried: "Help! help!"

The prieſt and his female Satan were alarmed at this unexpected movement. They pulled at the ſtruggling maid, who clung with her nails to the window ſhut-

ters, and cried with all her might. At laſt they diſengaged her by force, and hurried her into a remote apartment. Here the villain threatened to gag her if ſhe again was ſo *childiſh*, as he called it, as to act in this manner. A ſmile of the moſt profound contempt was her only anſwer.

Her cries, meanwhile, had really aſſembled the ſhepherds, who were eaſily ſatisfied with the ſtory that their prieſt, whoſe virtue they never ſuſpected, had, from motives of humanity, taken a lunatic niece into his houſe, whoſe diſordered underſtanding he hoped to be able to re-eſtabliſh. The prieſt deſired the honeſt peaſants to inform their neighbours of this circumſtance, that they might not again be alarmed by her cries. Thus every ſuſpicion was obviated. The helpleſs maid was left in the hands of her ſpoiler; for ſhe was ſoon deprived of the company of her faithful

 ſervant,

servant, whom they removed out of the way, by confining her fast in a dark cellar.

The priest left none of his hellish arts untried to habituate the mind of Babet to the thoughts of vice. Sometimes he descended to every kind of flattery, and again he endeavoured to alarm her with the basest threats. On the one side he painted to her a life of voluptuousness, if she would consent to live with him as his mistress or his wife, and on the other, an ignominious death, should he give her up as a royalist to the existing authorities. But neither his threats nor his flattery could produce the smallest effect on the pure innocence of the angelic maid.

The experienced procuress endeavoured to inflame her mind by lascivious descriptions, but their pollutions could not stain the mirror of her soul. It was impossible for the wretch to return, even in thought, to the period when she was innocent;

innocent; the ſtories ſhe repeated to Babet were unintelligible myſteries; and when ſhe impudently perſiſted, Babet ſhut her ear againſt her converſation, by a ſecret and fervent prayer.

The prieſt began at length to perceive that force alone could enable him to ſucceed in his infamous deſign, and he proteſted to the poor victim, with horrible imprecations, that he was reſolved to have recourſe to that expedient, if ſhe perſiſted any longer in ſcorning his love. She had now no other hope left but in the protection of a higher power. "God of the fatherleſs and orphan!" did ſhe exclaim in ſecret prayer, "haſt thou deprived me of every aid?—haſt thou denied me every inſtrument of ſaving my innocence by a voluntary death?—On thy ſtrong arm do I alone depend!—Thou wilt appear to me in the moment of my higheſt need!"

And he did appear—her protecting

angel veiled himſelf in the form of a friend. William appeared at her bedſide, as her innocence was on the point of being overpowered.—With the deliverance of Babet's honour juſt Providence too connected Jeanette's revenge, and the merited puniſhment for the murder of her child. The prieſt breathed out his foul ſpirit, and the laſt influence which hell exerciſed over the dying reprobate was to dictate the falſe declaration that William was a robber, a murderer.—Thus did he deſcend to the other world; the hand of his murdered child ſeized him, and led him diſmayed to the tribunal of an offended Judge.

But his villainous accuſation remained behind. Every thing teſtified againſt William; the words of the deceaſed, the cries of the procureſs, the broken door, the gagged maid, and laſtly his own confuſion; for the ſight of his ſuffering benefactreſs on the one hand, and of the

deteſted

detefted betrayer of his wife on the other, had ftruck him dumb with aftonifhment. Nothing declared in his favour but the voice of Babet, and fhe was confidered out of her fenfes.

The fhepherds, who were attached to the hypocritical prieft, loaded William with curfes, and almoft facrificed his life to the firft dictates of their refentment. It was now clear day, when they conducted him, his hands faft bound, down the hill, and took the road to the town. They told every perfon they met that this wretched ftranger was a difguifed royalift, who had murdered a worthy conftitutional prieft. He was followed by the curfes of every traveller, and every boy abufed and maltreated him.

Only in the village where William's friends lived did things affume a different appearance. They crowded round the prifoner, were amazed at the

enormity of the charge, doubted the truth of the ſtory, and expreſſed their ſorrow for his ſituation. The woman whoſe children he had ſaved came running up, made her way through the pikes, loudly proteſted his innocence, threw herſelf in the way of his conductors, and would not allow them to proceed. William was obliged to comfort her; he entreated her to leave him to his fate, and to truſt to the juſtice of God.

"Me you cannot ſave," whiſpered he ſoftly, "but ſave, at leaſt, the hapleſs maid who yet is confined in the houſe of the infamous parſon. She is not mad; ſhe will tell you all."

Theſe words were a myſtery to the good woman, but ſhe reflected on them. William was torn away. Not merely fruitleſs compaſſion accompanied him, but a number of ſtout young fellows armed themſelves, and haſtened to

ſtrengthen

ſtrengthen his guard, in order to defend him from the ill uſage of the people. In the evening they reached the town. Amidſt the ſhouts and hiſſès of the people he was thrown into priſon, into which not a ray of light could penetrate—but day ſhone in his ſoul. He had ſaved Babet and revenged Jeanette, and he contemplated death with tranquillity.

How indeed could he look at the future with hope ?—Even had he appeared innocent of the crime with which he was charged, the people demanded a ſacrifice. They ſhouted day and night round the walls of his priſon, and demanded his execution. It was decided. Very little attention was paid to legal formalities, and his trial was only poſtponed a few days, becauſe the fate of a number of emigrants engroſſed the executioner. He availed himſelf of this interval to write down his juſtification

with a pencil. He took leave of his wife, and bequeathed his bleffing to his child. He then pitched on one of the guards who daily attended him in his cell, whofe phyfiognomy appeared to promife moft humanity, and whom he had often obferved viewing him with compaffionate looks. He conjured him to forward that paper. "I have nothing to offer you," faid he, "but if you have a wife and child—"

"I have a wife and child," faid the national guard with emotion. He was going to fay fomething more, but he checked himfelf, took the paper, and withdrew.

The folemn hour at laft arrived. On the evening of the third day, William was carried before his judges. All the circumftances teftified ftrongly againft him. What he urged in his defence appeared an inconfiftent incredible ftory,

and after a ſhort hearing he was condemned to death. The next day was appointed for his execution.

He lay on his bed of ſtraw, with the invaluable conſciouſneſs of having never, in the courſe of his life, been guilty of a diſhonourable action. He prayed—but not for himſelf—he prayed for his wife and child. At midnight he fell into a placid ſlumber.

The rattling of keys ſuddenly awaked him. Two ſoldiers of the national guard entered with a dark lanthorn. William ſtarted up, and thought the awful moment was come. In one of the ſoldiers he recogniſed the man to whom he had entruſted the laſt proof of his love for Jeanette. "I am glad," ſaid William, "that you have been choſen to attend me on this occaſion. Be witneſs of my death, and announce to my wife that I have met it, if not with

perfect tranquillity, at leaſt with firmneſs."

"Be ſilent, and follow us," ſaid the ſoldier, as he raiſed up his chains to allow him to walk more eaſily. William followed in ſilence. They led him through a gloomy paſſage, which he never before had trod. They reached an open court. The ſtars glimmered over their heads. William wondered to find that it was yet night. They came to a little door, which ſtood open. When William went out, he heard the trampling of horſes, and ſoon diſtinguiſhed a carriage and four. The ſoldiers aſſiſted him to mount, and took their ſeats beſide him.

Away they drove, full ſpeed. William knew not what they meant to do with him. He aſked, but they gave him no anſwer, and the rattling of the carriage drowned his words. The moon

rofe. William looked round into the open fields—he thought it was all a dream.

After they had proceeded about a mile, they came to the high-way, and the carriage fuddenly ftopped. They obliged him to difmount. When he touched the ground, fome perfon kiffed his hand, and bathed it with tears. William looked round—it was the young woman whofe children he had faved.—The two foldiers were her hufband and brother.

The hufband now preffed him to his heart. "You faved my children from the flames," faid he with tears—"I have delivered you from an unmerited death—that was but the duty of a man, now fhall I reward you."

William followed him in filent aftonifhment; the young woman led him by the hand. A few fteps farther fomething white glittered behind a tree—a

female figure now rushed into his arms.—It was Babet!—Another woman came up, with tottering steps, and seemed scarce able to walk.—Babet pulled her friend along—the stranger stretched out her arms—the moon beamed upon her countenance—through the silence of night he heard his name pronounced—It was *Jeanette!*

CHAP. XVIII.

THE GRANDMOTHER.

IF the author ſhould anticipate objections, and begin this chapter with the obſervation that "probability is really nothing more than the feaſibility or poſſibility of a thing," it would ſeem to infer that he himſelf entertained doubts of the probability of this moſt true hiſtory. As every thing which happened, however, is pourtrayed to his fancy in the cleareſt light, and he hopes with the aſſiſtance of the muſes to ſketch it to the reader in no leſs lively colours, he ſhall take the liberty, merely to enhance his conſequence, to remind the reader that Dubos and Breitenger, Marmontel and Schlegel, are the examples he has followed; and that all theſe gentlemen have ſhown him that it is quite conceivable

ceivable and poſſible that William, Babet, Jeanette, and the worthy peaſants ſhould all meet at day-break on the road to Limoges, although the former eſcaped from his dungeon, and, what is ſtill more difficult, the latter muſt have eluded the vigilance of a lover. Were the author doubtful of his cauſe, he would intrench himſelf behind the example of celebrated poets. The works of many diſtinguiſhed writers are full of things which no man, with all the inclination in the world, can conſider probable. It does not however require this foreign aid to juſtify the incidents of this hiſtory ; for the ſimpleſt ſtatement will immediately bring down the reader from the fairy fields of the wonderful into the region of the uncommon, but at the ſame time very poſſible.

Gratitude impelled the honeſt peaſants, in contempt of every danger, to attempt William's deliverance. Their

ſituation

ſituation as ſoldiers of the national guard, aſſiſted however with Babet's diamonds, afforded them ready means for the attainment of their purpoſe. While the huſband began the undertaking, the wife, accompanied by her brother, went to the houſe of the deceaſed parſon, to diſcover the meaning of William's myſterious requeſt. At firſt, however, they found none but the old procureſs, who was buſy in packing up all the moveables, in order to transfer them to ſome place of ſafety. When aſked whether there was not a mad girl in the houſe, ſhe replied, that the poor creature had made her eſcape. Some degree of confuſion, which ſtill lurked behind her unbluſhing impudence, excited ſuſpicion. The keys were demanded, which ſhe refuſed.

The woman and her brother agreed to ſeparate, and traverſe the whole houſe from top to bottom, and at every door

they

they found shut to call aloud, to ascertain whether any prisoner would answer. This resolution they immediately carried into effect. The one went up stairs; the other down. In a few minutes they returned, and they had found more than they sought. "Above, there," said the sister, "I heard the voice of complaint." "And below, there," replied the brother, "I heard the sound of groans in the cellar."

The procuress was now aware of her danger. The honest soldier overtook her just as she was stealing out at the garden-door. She had left behind the heavy and bulky part of the spoil, and contented herself with a small bundle, from which the soldier pulled out a suspicious-looking casket. "To the right about, mistress!" said he in a stern voice, seizing her roughly by the arm: "Give me the keys, or I shall plunge you in the pond."

This pond, which was but a few ſteps diſtant, and the threatening aſpect of the young man, whoſe flaming eyes promiſed that he would keep his word, compelled the old ſerpent to be more compliant. She offered to exchange the keys for the caſket; but this was refuſed, in caſe any body ſhould be found who had a better claim to it. This hard condition produced a fruitleſs refuſal. The ſoldier advanced a few paces nearer the pond, and the keys were delivered up.

Joyfully the young woman aſcended the ſtair, and her brother haſtily went down to the cellar. The former liberated the languiſhing Babet, and the latter brought out the half-ſtarved maidſervant. While mutual explanations were going on, and Babet, to the aſtoniſhment of the peaſants, related her unfortunate ſtory, the old beldame took the opportunity of their confuſion to make her eſcape. She made off without

out the booty of the caſket, but provided with accompliſhments by which ſhe every where earned a ſubſiſtence, till at laſt, under Carrier's adminiſtration at Nantes, ſhe again roſe to be a woman of conſequence.

Babet was unable to give any ſatiſfactory account of her fate till ſhe heard that William was alive, and that hopes were entertained of his deliverance. With joy ſhe offered the contents of her caſket to contribute to that object, an offer which, in caſe of neceſſity, they promiſed to accept. She accompanied her deliverers to their rural hut, there to await the reſult of the dangerous enterpriſe, and to pray for the life of her friend.

We have left poor Jeanette in a very critical ſituation; and if it is conſidered what in theſe times a mayor might have attempted with impunity, we muſt be alarmed for her fate. Beſides her own grief,

grief, that of an amiable young woman likewiſe lay heavy upon her heart; for Beaublanc's wife could no longer conceal that the new infidelity of her huſband was no ſecret to her. She indeed was perfectly conſcious to herſelf that Jeanette's conduct was entirely unexceptionable. The fair ſtranger, however, ſtill was the deſtroyer of her peace, and ſhe could not love her. She ſhowed her all the attentions which her misfortunes and the duties of hoſpitality demanded; but the cordial kindneſs which ſeaſons all theſe attentions it was not in her power to diſplay. A cold politeneſs was all ſhe could beſtow, which to noble minds is not leſs galling than open hate.

They at laſt only met at table; they ſaluted each other coldly; they talked only of the moſt indifferent ſubjects, and both were glad when the deſſert was introduced. Beaublanc himſelf played a very awkward part. The more he felt

the impropriety of his conduct, the more he endeavoured, as men usually do, to justify it to himself by imputing it to causes in which he was not to blame. The cold behaviour of his wife he did not overlook, and he reproached her for it when they were alone. She answered him only with tears, which still more displeased him. In a word, the part which the different persons had to support was now become so serious, that a melancholy catastrophe was justly to be apprehended, when a beneficent *deus ex machina* appeared upon the stage.

One evening Jeanette heard a carriage drive up to the door, to which at first she paid no attention. When immediately on its arrival, however, she heard the whole house in motion; when she heard baggage brought up stairs, and Beaublanc's children skipping about in great joy, she asked the servant who brought her a light, whether any com-

pany

pany was come ?—" Our maſter's grandmother," ſaid the man.

The news was very agreeable to Jeanette, partly becauſe ſhe hoped that Beaublanc in preſence of his grandmother would be more attentive to his wife, partly becauſe, in a company of perſons who are intimately acquainted with each other's affairs, a ſtranger is always welcome, becauſe it gives ſome relief to the converſation. Jeanette, therefore, when ſummoned to ſupper, went down with more eaſe and courage than ſhe had done for ſeveral weeks. She ſaw upon the ſopha a venerable matron, who roſe on her entrance, and, with that amiable frankneſs which age is entitled to diſplay, came to meet her. Beaublanc preſented the old lady to her with the words, " My grandmother, madame Jerome."

" Madame Jerome !" ſtammered Jeanette, and grew pale.—" Madame Jerome !"

rome!" ſhe repeated with an earneſtneſs which ſtruck the company.

"You appear to know that name," ſaid the lady; "I flatter myſelf that it is not diſagreeable to you."

"Diſagreeable! No. Jerome was my father's name."

Beaublanc appeared ſurpriſed. The old lady ſtarted. With viſible anxiety ſhe rubbed her hands, and ſaid: "You are a German?"

"My father," continued Jeanette, "was a Frenchman, who had left his country for more than twenty years."

"His ſirname?"

"Joſeph Aimé."

"Great God!" exclaimed the old lady—her knees ſhook—ſhe ſunk in Beaublanc's arms. In a word, we need no longer conceal what the reader muſt have anticipated: ſhe was Jeanette's grandmother, and the mayor was Jeanette's couſin german.

Extra

Extravagance and irregular conduct had formerly irritated the old lady against her son; she banished him from her presence, and by her severity compelled him to seek his fortune in foreign countries. Necessity—the great master which leads its pupils either to virtue, or drives them to despair—had reclaimed the prodigal to the path of order and of industry. He did not choose, however, to communicate any intelligence of himself to his mother till he had accumulated as much property as should enable him to dispense with all assistance from his relations, in order that she might have no foundation for thinking that he only feigned repentance for the sake of her money. When this moment arrived, he wrote the most tender and affecting letters. A series of years, however, had elapsed; his family had experienced various vicissitudes. From Picardy, where they formerly resided, they

had,

had, on account of accidents unconnected with this hiſtory, gone to reſide in Languedoc; his letters, therefore, never reached the place of their deſtination.

His fruitleſs expectation of an anſwer from his mother long embittered his domeſtic happineſs. He could aſcribe her ſilence only to two cauſes: either his mother was irreconcileable, or ſhe was dead. The former his heart diſclaimed; he wept over her therefore as no more, and ceaſed to write.

Madame Jerome, on the other hand, had long ſince forgotten her reſentment; for the reſentment of a mother is like a flake of ſnow in the month of May. She reproached herſelf bitterly for her harſhneſs. In the ſleepleſs hours of night ſhe wept her loſt ſon; ſhe ſaw him wandering in the world poor and abandoned. With what joy would ſhe have called him back! but in what region of the

globe

globe was ſhe to ſeek him ?—With what anxiety did ſhe expect ſome filial application from him !—But he was ſilent.—How often did ſhe invite him by public advertiſements in the newſpapers to return ! They never reached him. Was it poſſible that he, who, in ſpite of his levity and wildneſs, was ſo affectionate towards her, could remain ſo long ſilent? —Ah ! no ! he is dead ! he has fallen a ſacrifice to his mother's unnatural ſeverity !

This reproach, which inceſſantly preyed on her maternal heart, threw a gloom over her evening of life—and now to be ſo delightfully awaked from this diſagreeable dream ! True, indeed, her Joſeph was gone !—but he had lived happily, and he had left behind a youthful repreſentative who fondly called her *Mother* ; a being of her own fleſh and blood, and of whom ſhe had reaſon to be proud.

Every thing in the houſe now aſſumed a quite different aſpect. Beaublanc ceaſed to be an object of dread, ſince his conſanguinity dictated to him new duties, and the preſence of his grandmother impoſed upon him a ſalutary reſtraint. He was aſhamed when he reflected that madame Jerome had a right to ſay to him: "Baptiſte, remember with what ardour you ſued to obtain your wife; think what I did and ſacrificed to enable you to ſucceed." He trembled to think that his wife might complain of his conduct, and in what light he muſt then appear to a mother, to whom he was indebted for ſo many favours; one, too, whom amidſt all his errors he had ever continued to love with filial affection.

Jeanette at laſt completed his reformation by a ſtep which was now eaſy for her, ſince ſhe conſidered Beaublanc as her couſin, and was ſecure in the pro-

tection

tection of her grandmother. She sought what formerly she had so carefully avoided, an opportunity of being alone with him. She even led the conversation to a circumstance which she formerly did not wish to seem to perceive, his passion for her. She then spoke with such interest to his heart; she painted the sorrow of his wife and her own with such truth and feeling; she mingled such cordial assurances of friendship and gratitude with her delicate reproaches, that he threw himself at her feet quite overcome, and with tears of the most sincere repentance entreated her to forget his improper conduct.

The first moments of repentance derive a peculiar strength from that virtue which is ever ready to unite in the bands of cordial affection, when it observes the least advances to amendment. Beaublanc felt in himself a spirit which animated him with a serene joy, to which

he had long been a ſtranger. He was happy to feel that it coſt him no pangs to prepare what was neceſſary for Jeanette's departure. A few days, indeed, ſhe was obliged to ſpend with her new-diſcovered grandmother; but the good old lady was too conſiderate to require more than a few days, under the condition however that Jeanette, with her huſband and child, ſhould viſit her as ſoon as the troubles of the republic allowed her to do it with ſafety.

Doubly reimburſed by liberal preſents for all ſhe had loſt by the violence of the populace; furniſhed with paſſports which perfectly ſecured her ſafety, with the delightful idea of having re-eſtabliſhed the domeſtic felicity of her amiable hoſteſs, ſhe proceeded on her journey to Guienne.

CHAP. XIX.

THE PLOT IS UNFOLDED.

HOW delightful are the feelings of the traveller, who, after a long abſence, diſcovers at a diſtance the lofty ſpires of a city, in which reſide thoſe on whom his heart hangs with fondneſs! Now agitated with alarm, now animated with hope, he feels the ſweeteſt elation of joy. Every peaſant he meets returning from the market, every citizen going out when his work is finiſhed to his cabbage garden, he is inclined to aſk: "Know you into whoſe embraces I am haſtening?—Is he happy and well?"

How peeviſh he feels at every crooked turning of the road! how he curſes the phlegm of the poſtillion, who, ſo near the end of his journey, ſtops to faſten his ſtirrup, or to take a glaſs of beer at ſome

obſcure inn! He whoſe whole being is abſorbed in the idea of meeting thoſe he loves, is inſenſible to hunger and thirſt. Now the whip cracks and the horſes fly along, the carriage rolls down the hill, and the ſoul far outſtrips its ſpeed. O ſevere trial of patience! A tract of heavy ſand yet remains to paſs, and the horſes again move ſlowly on. Now he ſits, and with both his hands ſeizes the carriage door, puſhes it on as if to aſſiſt its rapidity. Every moment he thruſts his head out at the window to meaſure the extent of the ſand, which ſeems to ſtretch to infinity like the deſerts of Sahara.

Such were the feelings which agitated Jeanette's breaſt when ſhe approached the town in which ſhe expected to find her huſband. At laſt ſhe reached the gate, and had a new delay to encounter. Her paſſport muſt be examined. It availed nothing here that nature had written the paſſport of virtue and inno-

cence

cence upon her brow; this might have availed her only on the banks of the Ohio, or Hudſon's Bay. Captious objections were advanced; her perſon was to be compared with the deſcription. Formalities and ceremonies of every kind were to be obſerved. Here an officer of the municipality thought he diſcharged his duty well in proportion to the time he conſumed; there an officer of the police thought that the colour of her eyes did not exactly correſpond with the original.

Every thing was at laſt adjuſted, paſſport and baggage were ſtamped with the ſeal of liberty. The poſtillion ſlowly mounted his horſe, and, looking back, enquired where madame choſe to alight?

"At the firſt good inn," replied Jeanette haſtily; and the carriage rolled heavily through the ſtreets. The principal ſtreet was full of men; the windows were likewiſe crowded with ſpectators.

tators.—Jeanette ſaw nobody; ſhe looked only for William's face. The people ſeemed in great agitation; the words murderer and guillotine were re-echoed through the mob.—Jeanette was quite inattentive to every thing; ſhe had no ears but for William's voice. With a light ſpring ſhe jumped out of the carriage when it ſtopped at the gate of an inn. A goſſiping hoſteſs conducted her up ſtairs, and immediately began to entertain her with the news of the day. She told her that a priſoner of war, an officer, had murdered a conſtitutional prieſt, and violated his niece; that he had been thrown into priſon, and probably in a ſhort time would receive his deſerts under the guillotine.

Jeanette ſtarted at the words priſoner of war, but inſtantly laid aſide her fear when ſhe heard the nature of the crime of which he was accuſed. "He has dined at my table," ſaid the prattling hoſteſs;

hoftefs; "he appeared fo quiet, well-behaved a young man, that I would not have fcrupled to have trufted him either with my ftrong box or my daughter. But ftill waters are deep—Brave he may be, as he wears a crofs, and they call him major."

Jeanette ftood petrified, and the blood forfook her cheeks.—"A crofs?—Major?—What is his name?"

Alas! he had a very hard German name; the hoftefs could not pronounce it. "But how did he look?"—She defcribed his perfon feature for feature. It was eafy to fee that William had fat for the picture. From Jeanette's pale lips dropped the name of Eichenwald! and —"Right!" interrupted the hoftefs—"Right! Eichenwald is the very name!"

Poor Jeanette funk to the ground; night obfcured her eyes; her pulfe at her heart ceafed to beat, and a convulfive movement of her lips was the only

ſymptom of life. The hoſteſs in terrible alarm, invoking all the ſaints to her aid, contributed all the aſſiſtance in her power. "Ah! my God! Ah! poor madame!" ſhe repeated an hundred times, and tears of ſympathy burſt from her eyes when ſhe heard that the lady before her was the wife of the unfortunate priſoner.

She immediately ſhut the door, that the populace might not hear of the diſcovery, and confound innocence with guilt. But Jeanette became delirious: ſhe inſiſted on going out—ſhe would throw herſelf at the feet of the judges—in the public market-place proteſt the innocence of her huſband.—The good-natured hoſteſs was obliged to detain her by force, was obliged to ſtifle her cries by ſhutting the windows, and repeat to her a thouſand times that her interference would only accelerate the fate of her huſband. When at laſt Jeanette's

nette's ſtrength was exhauſted; when ſhe lay breathleſs on the ſopha, and her tears, which paſſion had ſuppreſſed, began to ſteal ſlowly down her cheeks, ſhe began to liſten to the conſolation of the hoſteſs.

"I fain would believe," ſaid the kind-hearted old woman, "that he is not guilty of the ſhocking crime; I wiſh to believe it becauſe you love him ſo well; and truly I have a good opinion of him myſelf, for many a day has he ſat ſoberly and quietly at my table: but of what avail is his innocence?—Alas! madame, innocence does nothing for us now-a-days. Either appearances are againſt him, or he has powerful enemies; nothing but money can ſave him."

Jeanette haſtily pointed to her coffer.

"I underſtand you," proceeded the hoſteſs; "you have money; you will ſacrifice all?"

Jeanette nodded aſſent, and her feeble

tongue in vain attempted to pronounce the word "all."

"Make yourſelf eaſy therefore awhile; I ſhall put on my cloak, and mingle in the crowd, to hear what is the ſtate of matters. If he is innocent, that God who protected Daniel in the lion's den will not forſake him, and will diſcover us means for his deliverance."

With theſe words ſhe went out, and left Jeanette in the moſt agoniſing tortures. The firſt evening the hoſteſs did not ſucceed in diſcovering any thing favourable to the priſoner. Jeanette's ſituation bordered on phrenſy; a fever preyed upon her frame, and in the morning ſhe was delirious. The hoſteſs never ſtirred from her bed-ſide; as ſoon as it was day ſhe committed her to the care of her daughter, and haſtened out on an errand of humanity to ſeek the balm of hope.

About

About noon ſhe returned with a ſoldier of the national guard, whom ſhe brought with a myſterious air to Jeanette's bed-ſide. "This brave man," whiſpered ſhe to the patient, "is one of your huſband's guards."—Jeanette roſe, and haſtily ſeized the ſtranger's hand. Her eyes were hot and enflamed, but tears refuſed to flow.

"Madame," ſaid the ſoldier, "your ſituation would affect me had I no other motive to venture my life for your huſband."—Jeanette made a ſignal to the hoſteſs to reach the cheſt, which ſtood at the foot of the bed. She opened it, and it was full of money. With a melancholy, affecting look of entreaty, ſhe preſented it to the ſoldier, who rejected it with ſome diſpleaſure.

"Madame," ſaid he with the accents of offended generoſity, "your huſband threw himſelf into the flames to ſave my children.

children. I hope that is enough to induce you to ſhut up your ſtrong box. Here is my hand, I ſhall ſave your huſband's life, or die with him."

Jeanette attempted to kiſs his hand; tears of gratitude again ruſhed to her eyes; a fervent look to heaven ſpoke her thanks to God and her deliverer.— When the beams of hope, like an electrical ſhock, reſtored her the uſe of her tongue, and ſhe again was able to ſpeak, ſhe preſſed upon the generous ſoldier as much as was neceſſary for the payment of all expences; but he inſiſted that he alone muſt anſwer theſe, ſhould it coſt him his laſt ſixpence.

She now aſked pen and ink to write a note to her huſband to announce her arrival, and communicate to him conſolation in his dungeon. The ſoldier, however, refuſed to carry the letter. He would not even undertake to inform the

priſoner

prisoner of Jeanette's arrival, because it was to be feared that his joy might betray him.

"Patience!" said the generous young man, "patience till to-morrow, or the day after; by that time it will be decided. Meanwhile this good woman will bring you as soon as it is night to the village where I reside. There you may remain in tranquillity in my house, and wait the result."

"In tranquillity!" sighed Jeanette.

The soldier endeavoured to raise her spirits, informed the hostess what way she should take, and hastened back to his post to avoid suspicion. Regardless of her fever and her weakness, Jeanette prepared for her departure; and when night spread its shades over the earth, she set out in company with her worthy hostess, and about midnight reached the young woman's cottage. She was received

ceived as the wife of her benefactor, and in Babet ſhe found a ſiſter.

What paſſed in the heart of the lovely maid when ſhe ſo ſuddenly ſaw the wife of her beloved appear, thoſe who are acquainted with the human heart may conceive. Her attachment, however, was too pure and innocent to permit the ſmalleſt feeling of jealouſy. She ſaw only William's danger; ſhe forgot her wiſhes, her dreams, and clung to a being who prayed as fervently as herſelf for his deliverance.

God heard the prayers of theſe kindred ſpirits. On the evening of the third day they received a meſſage, to repair at midnight to a rendezvous on the road to Limoges. Trembling they ſet out—Silently they kneeled on the graſs, and ſtarted at every ruſtling of the leaves. Their hearts beat high when they heard at a diſtance the ſound of a carriage.—

When it came nearer and nearer—when it ſtopped—the young woman flew like lightning to the road—Babet haſtened after her—and Jeanette tottered between hope and fear till ſhe could go no farther, and ſunk into the arms of her huſband.

CHAP. XX.

THE FLIGHT.

THE reader will not be greatly surprifed that our hero, at the fcene before him, which feemed altogether fo miraculous, began to think whether his head was not feparated from his body, and thofe he faw were not the vifionary fhades of Elyfium hovering round him? —The explanation of the myftery, however, upon a public and well frequented road, might be dangerous. The brave foldier roufed William from his dream, and led him into the thicket, where a large open cart waited for them, furnifhed with every thing that was neceffary to facilitate their flight.

In ten minutes William was freed from his irons. Inftead of his uniform, he

he put on a coarſe frock, and his hair he tied up under a red cap. Jeanette and Babet were likewiſe obliged to bind up their waving locks in a leſs conſpicuous form. Coarſe handkerchiefs concealed what their faſhionable corſlets threatened to betray; ſhort clumſy coats diſguiſed the graces of their perſon, and monſtrous wooden ſhoes covered their elegant feet.

Already Jeanette and Babet had taken leave of their kind hoſteſs, with tears. William had aſſiſted them into the carriage, and was himſelf about to follow, when an unexpected diſcovery changed his reſolution, and almoſt determined him voluntarily to return to his priſon. Till now it had never occurred to him, in the flutter of ſpirits into which he had been thrown, to enquire who was his conductor; and for the firſt time he was fully aware of the extent of the ſacrifice

which

which gratitude had led the worthy ruſtics to make.

The ſoldier had retired a few ſteps with his wife. William ſaw how anxiouſly ſhe clung round his neck; he heard her ſob, and aſk when ſhe ſhould ſee him again?—He heard her huſband comforting her in broken accents; he heard him bleſſing her and his children, promiſing to return as ſoon as he could venture it without riſk of his life.—The poor woman could not tear herſelf away; ſhe ſtill hung upon him to take her laſt embrace, till her huſband whiſpered her: "Think of the fire, and our duty!"—She then let him go.

"God protect you!" ſaid he, and went away.—His wife remained ſtanding and wringing her hands.—"No!" cried William with emotion—"No! I cannot purchaſe my life at ſuch a price. If my deliverance muſt render you a

helpleſs

helpleſs fugitive, your wife a widow, and your children orphans, I ſhould a thouſand times rather return to my cell, and meet death to-morrow."

Theſe words diffuſed terror through the whole party. Babet and Jeanette roſe up from their ſeats, the ſoldier ſtopped, his wife immediately dried up her tears, and ſtifled her ſighs.—"What do you mean?" began the ſoldier in firm voice. "Take your place quietly in the carriage. The ſtep which puts my life in danger cannot be recalled. Suppoſe even that you were to return to your priſon, it might now be more difficult to get into it unobſerved than it was to get out. You muſt already be miſſed. If not, you cannot reach the town before day-break; and then it muſt be juſt as fatal to your guard, whether you really eſcaped, or only attempted it by his connivance. Away then, without loſing a moment! My wife and child I com-

mit

mit to the protection of God and my brother, who was not present with me on the post, and consequently has nothing to answer for. I will conduct you to the frontiers, and there remain till the tyrant of my country is overthrown, which sooner or later must happen, as I know the temper of my comrades. Justice will then have time to breathe again, and it will no longer be reckoned criminal to obey the dictates of gratitude and humanity.—Away then, and God be with us!"

He seized the reins, and leaped into the saddle. William, though his alarms were not banished, was convinced by his arguments, that now to recede would nothing diminish the dangers to which the gallant fellow was exposed; he resigned himself to necessity, seated himself by Jeanette's side, and the carriage drove on.

Had I *Louvet*'s pen to paint the dan-

ger of this flight, the deſcription would anſwer the fearful expectation of the reader. Often would he remain breathleſs with anxiety, and ſtretch every fibre of attention.—Five nights they travelled through unfrequented roads, known only to their guide. During the day they concealed themſelves in woods and deep retired valleys among the mountains. Twice did the harneſs break in paſſing over the rocks. On the third night they loſt their way, and at dawn they ſaw, with terror and aſtoniſhment, the lofty ſpires of a large town at a little diſtance; and as they ſuddenly turned the horſes to ſhun this danger, one of them dropped down dead.

The courage of the men and the firmneſs of the women at laſt overcame all dangers. The morning ſun of the fifth day dawned as they entered the frontiers of Switzerland. In vain Jeanette opened her purſe, and Babet her

caſket,

casket, to supply their generous guide, at least with what was necessary to secure him from want during his exile. "I can work," said he—"Industry and honesty are welcome every where. If you would alleviate the pain of separation from my family, give me nothing, in order that while I follow my labour I may have the consoling reflection that I have done well."

About noon, William with his fair companions reached a town, where they resolved to recruit themselves after the many difficulties they had encountered. There their hearts, for the first time, opened to easy unembarrassed conversation. Fear no longer sealed their lips, no dangers now obliterated the remembrance of the past, or clouded their hopes of the future.

Jeanette had now an opportunity to enquire with cordial sympathy the history of her husband's friend; and Wil-

liam availed himſelf of this occaſion to relate, in Babet's preſence, the ſtate of his heart. He gained this advantage by the ſtep, that he was not obliged to addreſs himſelf to Babet, and ſhe could bluſh in ſilence, as the looks of her friend were too delicate to dwell on her ingenuous ſhame.

He now painted Frederick's paſſion in the moſt glowing colours, expatiated with eloquence on all the amiable qualities which the reſerve of his friend had rendered him incapable of diſplaying, and concluded with the ardent wiſh (which he addreſſed to heaven, and not to Babet) that the lovely creature might one day reward the firſt love of a man of honour by a mutual attachment.

Babet was ſilent, and fixed her eyes on the ground. What really paſſed in her heart it is impoſſible for us to unfold. All that ſhe heard, however, connected with the impoſſibility of poſſeſſing the

man who had made the firſt impreſſion on her heart, and now ſpoke ſo warmly for another, combined too with her helpleſs ſituation in a foreign land, produced no diſadvantageous impreſſion on her mind to Frederick's pretenſions.

William now was ſilent, and left the reſt to his wife, to whom he made a ſignificant ſign to ſecond the wiſhes of Babet, convinced that in ſuch caſes a woman is the beſt agent that can be employed.

CHAP. XXI.

THE TYRANNY OF HONOUR.

TWO days had now elapſed. Repoſe and anxiety to ſee her child had armed Jeanette with new ſtrength. For ſome days paſt ſhe had obſerved a cloud on William's brow, the cauſe of which ſhe was unable to explain; and ſhe hoped, by a ſpeedy departure, to reſtore his wonted ſerenity. She entreated him, therefore, to make preparations to ſet out next morning, and he promiſed to comply.

This promiſe indeed appeared to coſt him ſome pain. He ſeemed reluctantly to make preparations for the journey; and the evening previous to their intended departure he was uncommonly penſive; melancholy clouded his open countenance. Jeanette's eye dwelt upon

 him

him with anxious looks; but as ſhe could not deviſe the reaſon, and he ſtudiouſly evaded her enquiries, ſhe contented herſelf in the expectation that time would unravel the myſtery, and baniſhed her uneaſy apprehenſions with the thoughts of ſoon ſeeing her infant.

The morning came. Jeanette awoke, but William was gone. On the day of their departure ſo many things were to be arranged that at firſt ſhe was not ſurpriſed. She leaped out of bed, and went into the adjoining room, to awake Babet, and began very buſily to pack up her baggage.

Breakfaſt was brought up, and with it the waiter delivered her a ſealed letter. She glanced over it, and turned pale—the addreſs was William's hand-writing. With trembling hands ſhe haſtily broke the ſeal, and read as follows:

" My deareſt wife! It is not in my power to return with you. I am bound

 by

by my word of honour, and I muſt perform it. For the ſake of my comrades who ſtill remain in captivity, I muſt not abuſe the indulgence for which we pledged our honour. Be eaſy, however. I do not intend to deliver myſelf up to the frantic deluded people. There are ſtill in France men of worth, who will protect me till the expected exchange takes place. Be not offended at the ſtep I have thus taken. I am indeed a huſband and a father, but I am likewiſe a citizen and a ſoldier. I cannot appear in my native land as a diſhonoured runaway. I cannot enjoy happineſs in your arms if I violate my word. If my joyful preſages do not deceive me, we ſhall ſoon meet again. Proceed in your journey—may it be happy! Carry my bleſſing to our child. I leave you far from the theatre of war, and your road home is quite ſecure. You have an amiable companion, a faithful ſer-

vant, and more money than you will require. I am eaſy therefore. Proceed on your journey, then, this very day. Every thing is ready. Forbear all fruitleſs attempts to diſcover me. When you receive this letter I ſhall be upon the territories of France. Take the ſhorteſt way home—do not plunge yourſelf into new dangers; think of our deſerted child.—Heaven guide you, and ſhorten our ſeparation!"

To ſee a thunderbolt from the unclouded ſky ſuddenly ſhiver to pieces the lofty oak by his ſide, would leſs aſtoniſh the affrighted traveller than this letter amazed Jeanette. Pale and trembling ſhe handed the letter to Babet. "Ah! William, William, what haſt thou done?—You are going to a land where the laws of nations afford no protection—to a land where noble ſentiments are deſpiſed, where the few who yet are animated by principles of huma-

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nity muſt bend under the iron rod of tyranny; and can I then be eaſy?—A thouſand dangers have I defied—through difficulties innumerable, through frightful precipices did I preſs to find thee—yet again you abandon me!—Ah! William, what haſt thou done?"

Thus did ſhe lament under the heavy load of her anguiſh, and was inacceſſible to the cold conſolations of her friend. Her ſpirits quite exhauſted, unable to turn her attention to any object, ſhe did unconſciouſly whatever ſhe was deſired; conſented, without being ſenſible of what ſhe did, to Babet's requeſt that they ſhould leave this melancholy ſpot. She followed her into the carriage, ſeated herſelf in ſilence, and neither aſked nor cared whither they were going.

When ſhe began again to breathe her native air, when they paſſed the frontiers of Germany, Babet ſucceeded in rouſing her from her ſtupor, by remind-

ing her of her child. At last, when they had advanced within a day's journey of the place of their destination, the feelings of the wife yielded to those of the mother; her imagination painted the little smiling William stretching out his arms to her. She calculated in idea how much he had grown; she heard the new words he had learnt to lisp, and rejoiced in the thought that in spite of her long absence he would still know his mother.

It was evening when they reached a little town only two short stages from the object of her tender anxiety. As they had pursued their journey day and night without repose, the wearied Babet here wished to enjoy a few hours sleep; and in this wish she was confirmed by the representations of the landlord, who told them that there was a wood in their way through which it was very unsafe to pass. "A desperate band," said he, "con-

sisting

fiſting of German deſerters, Dutch runaways, and French refugees, have collected here, and render travelling very dangerous. The neighbourhood of the frontier favours their deſigns. Dreadful ſtories of robbery and murder are circulated, which perhaps may be exaggerated, but yet are terrible enough if you believe only one half of them. Government, it is ſaid, however, is making preparations to put an end to the diſorder, and a ſtrong party of ſoldiers is to be ſent to ſurround the wood, and to hunt the robbers from their retreats." Whether the detachment had yet arrived, whether the attempt had yet been made to clear the wood, and with what ſucceſs, the landlord could not tell, and he thought it very dangerous for the travellers to proceed, eſpecially by night.

The timorous Babet agreed with the hoſt, and reminded her friend of William's

liam's recommendation to expoſe herſelf to no new dangers. Maternal anxiety, however, overcame every apprehenſion; for a mother's love knows no fear. Jeanette had formed to herſelf ſo delightful an idea of embracing, at day-break, her ſleeping babe—it was clear moon-light—and the hoſt himſelf had confeſſed that precautions were taken by government for the ſafety of travellers. Rumour too magnified the danger; the wood was already cleared of its deſperate inhabitants, and ſuch frightful tales were commonly circulated, like ſtories of apparitions, to frighten the timorous. In a word, her maternal anxiety overcame the fears of her friend, and, lighted by the riſing moon, they proceeded on their journey.

Their confidence was increaſed, when at the diſtance of half a mile from the fatal wood they met a traveller on horſe-

back, who had rode through it unmolested, and who communicated to them the agreeable intelligence, that in the morning two companies of grenadiers had been drawn out, and had invested the wood on every side..

CHAP. XXII.

THE ROBBERS.

IT would be an interefting fubject for the curious in the phenomena of the human mind, to inveftigate why the foul expands itfelf in open and luminous fituations, and the flame of courage burns then more bright; why, on the contrary, in the gloomy receffes of a rocky cliff, or the obfcurity of a fhaggy wood, the breaft feems contracted, and the frame is agitated by an involuntary horror.

As long as the road ftretched through cultivated fields, and here and there the village dog was heard to bark, the travellers felt no apprehenfion. When the fatal wood, however, blacker and blacker, fkirted the horizon before them; when they began to enter upon it, and the

the ſolitary trees gradually thickened into an impenetrable grove, through which the beams of the moon could not paſs, they began to conceive ſome degree of alarm. An anxious ſilence prevailed in the carriage—every accidental ruſtling among the leaves, every deceitful ſhadow of the trees, ſtruck them with diſmay.

At little intervals the wood ſometimes opened, and diſplayed little ſpots, on which the gentle light of the moon ſhone unclouded. They breathed more freely when they came to ſuch places. After they for near an hour had been tortured by ſecret terror, Babet firſt ventured to whiſper to her friend the agreeable hope that probably they ſhould very ſoon reach the extremity of the wood. Hardly had ſhe ſaid this, however, when a ſhrill whiſtle from a thicket on their left hand ſounded ſo frightfully through the ſilence of night, that they ſtarted

up.

up. The ſignal was repeated at a little diſtance before them in the ſame ſhrill note, and immediately they heard the trampling of horſes, and the ſound of human voices.

"God protect us!" ſaid the poſtillion, and croſſed himſelf. In trembling broken accents Jeanette endeavoured to comfort her companion with the hope that perhaps it was the grenadiers who were in ſearch of the robbers, and who guarded the road. But at this moment a ſhot which levelled the poſtboy confirmed all their fears. The carriage was ſurrounded, and the ladies ſcreamed for help. One of the robbers mounted upon a ſtately charger advanced to the door with a piſtol in his hand; he ſpoke to them in French, and ordered them, as they prized their lives, to obſerve a ſtrict ſilence. One of his companions pulled down Peter from the coach-box; another leaped into the ſaddle, and drove

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the carriage into the wood. The robbers ſurrounded it on all ſides; two of them ſtood behind, and one rode before, to guide it through the rough, unformed path.

Scarcely had they advanced two hundred paces, when the carriage ſtruck violently againſt ſome felled timber, and broke the axle-tree. The robbers ſwore; the ladies trembled; nothing remained to be done but to take the animate as well as inanimate booty out of the carriage, and leave it. This the robbers inſtantly reſolved to do; twenty hands were employed in removing the baggage; and the perſon on horſeback, who appeared the commander of the gang, came up and politely requeſted the ladies to diſmount. They were obliged to obey.

He immediately quitted them again to ſuperintend his companions, and to haſten the buſineſs. Jeanette and Babet

ſat down upon the moſſy ſtump of a tree, and were obliged to look on and ſee their little property thrown about and plundered. Moſt of it was heaped upon poor Peter's ſhoulders, and when he groaned under the burden they ſtimulated him with laſhes. In a very few minutes the robbers had emptied the carriage, and ſhaken the lining to ſee whether any thing was concealed.

They immediately put the cavalcade in motion, and the ladies at firſt believed that the robbers would content themſelves with the booty, and leave them behind in the wood, as nobody ſeemed to take any concern about them. Their ſituation was ſo diſtreſſing, that the frightful alternative of remaining alone in the heart of the pathleſs wood ſeemed preferable, and Jeanette in ſecret breathed a fervent prayer that they might be left; for a mother can find her way through a wilderneſs to her child. Of

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this wretched hope, however, they were deprived. Two ſaddled horſes were brought, and a ſignal was made that they ſhould mount and follow the reſt of the party as faſt as poſſible.

They declined with abundance of tears, and both declared that they had never in their lives been on horſeback; that they would rather follow on foot; but their entreaties were fruitleſs. A dozen of rude fellows ſurrounded them, and with coarſe jeſts promiſed to take care and keep them from falling. When the ladies ſtill refuſed, they ſeized them rudely, and placed them on horſeback by force.

At this moment a volley of muſket ſhot poured in among them; the balls whiſtled about Jeanette's ears. Two of the robbers who ſtood beſide her fell dead; others ſeverely wounded crept away deeper into the thicket.

The whole wood ſeemed ſuddenly to

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be animated. Thundering cries resounded through the trees. "*This way! this way!*" cried a man on horseback, who cut his way through the bushes with his sabre. Behind him grenadiers' caps glanced in the light of the moon.

The robbers who had gone before threw down their booty when they heard the firing, seized their arms, and assembled courageously round their leader, who boldly advanced to meet the soldiers. A furious engagement began, which was rendered still more dreadful by the darkness of the night, and the narrow space within which the combatants were confined. Jeanette and her companion were almost as much exposed to danger as those engaged. They attempted to fly, but on all sides they were surrounded by the sanguinary conflict. Balls struck the trees by their side, and wounded men dropped down at their feet.

The robbers exceeded the ſoldiers in number, and the latter began to retreat, ſtill maintaining a running fight. By this movement the ladies were involved in the middle of the crowd. The officer who commanded them was wounded. His horſe received a ſhot, and reeled—he leaped to the ground juſt beſide Babet, who lay trembling on her knees, and with a ſigh ſtammered the words, "I can do no more!"

"My God!" exclaimed Babet as ſhe wrung her hands, and threw her tearful eyes to heaven. At theſe words, the wounded man looked up, ſcreamed "Babet! Babet!" and plunged anew into the battle. That ſweet name ſeemed inſtantaneouſly to have cloſed his wounds, and manned his arms with ſupernatural ſtrength. His ſword flaſhed deſtruction among the robbers, and at laſt he reached their valiant leader, with whom he maintained an unequal combat. He was on foot,

foot, the latter was on horſeback. He was exhauſted with loſs of blood, his antagoniſt was unhurt; he attacked him however with undaunted courage, and diſputed every inch of ground with the captain of the robbers, whoſe horſe and undiminiſhed vigour gave him every advantage.

Alas! he was again driven back to Babet's feet—covered with new wounds he ſunk down beſide her, and exclaimed, "Here will I die with pleaſure!"—The ſtranger was bending forwards to cleave his head, when the ſight of Babet again ſeemed to be endued with an inexplicable charm. "Babet!" cried the robber, and his uplifted arm dropped nerveleſs. "Babet!" repeated he; then leaped haſtily from his horſe, ſeized the kneeling maid, and hurried her through the crowd deeper into the thicket. The officer lay unable to move, or to make the leaſt oppoſition to this attempt.

CHAP. XXIII.

THE DELIVERER.

SCARCELY had Babet thus, without her confent, quitted the fpot where robbers and foldiers contended with equal courage and doubtful fortune, when the fcene fuddenly changed. An officer at the head of twenty huffars ftarted fuddenly from the thicket, fell like thunder upon the robbers, and in a moment decided the victory. All that were able to fly took to flight. The place was covered with killed and wounded. Thofe who in the attempt to retreat were taken prifoners, were bound.

The officer leaped from his horfe, haftily traverfed the field of battle, found Jeanette, who lay fenfelefs under an oak, and threw himfelf down befide her.—She

ſighed—ſhe opened her eyes, and found herſelf in William's arms!

Aſtoniſhment and joy deprived her of ſpeech. She could not aſk what miracle had ſent her huſband as her deliverer. She could only feel an unſpeakable joy, and this feeling venting itſelf in tears, ſhe hung on his neck and wept.

The groans of a wounded man attracted his attention, and rouſed William from the delightful tranſports into which he was thrown. He looked round, ſaw a man lying weltering in his blood—looked again—ſtarted with affright—and ſunk down overpowered with grief by the ſide of the ſufferer.—It was Frederick—his friend, who knew him not; for the night of death ſat heavy on his eyes.

"Help! help!" cried William with great emotion, and pulled out his handkerchief to bind up the wounds, which bled violently. Jeanette, too, came up

and uttered a piercing ſhriek, when ſhe recogniſed the pale countenance of the gallant youth.

The ſoldiers deſiſted from the purſuit of the robbers, returned, and haſtily made up two litters of twigs; gently placed the wounded man upon the one, and the exhauſted Jeanette upon the other, and bore them with cautious ſteps through the wood. The huſſars drove the priſoners before them. William rode ſlowly beſide the litters, and a thouſand conflicting emotions agitated his breaſt. When he looked at the wife he had ſaved from ſuch danger, he was filled with a melancholy joy; but when he turned to his dying friend, and heard Jeanette's lamentations for the loſt Babet, his pleaſure in being the deliverer of his wife was cruelly embittered.

At day-break they reached the extremity of the wood, and with it a village; where, though deſtitute of every accom-

modation,

modation, they were obliged to remain, for the wounded man could not endure to be moved any farther. William immediately difpatched a huffar to the next town to call furgeons. They came about noon, and to William's unfpeakable joy declared that none of his friend's wounds were mortal. They pledged themfelves for his recovery, and faid, that the only dangerous circumftance was the weaknefs which the lofs of fo much blood had occafioned.

The parfon of the parifh, a benevolent old man, now came to the inn, and with the kindeft hofpitality made an offer of his houfe for the accommodation of the patient. The offer was gratefully accepted, and Frederick, after the firft dreffing was taken off, with permiffion of the furgeon was removed. The good old man prepared the beft and quieteft room in the houfe for his reception; and with the moft tender anxiety produced

whatever

whatever his kitchen, his cellar, and his little domeſtic medicine cheſt could furniſh.

In the evening Frederick again became perfectly ſenſible. He could not ſpeak, however, but he ſmiled complacently when he ſaw his friend ſitting at his bed-ſide. He ſmiled, too, when he ſaw Jeanette buſied going backwards and forwards; and his eye glanced with looks of anxiety round the room, as if he ſtill ſought another object. William underſtood this look, and with a ſignificant geſture aſked his wife, Whether Babet was yet aſleep?—Jeanette nodded aſſent, but ſhe was forced to turn aſide to conceal the riſing tear. This little deception produced a happy effect upon Frederick; he ſeemed to be perfectly ſatisfied, and ſoon after fell aſleep.

By the fatigues of her journey, and the terrors ſhe had ſuſtained the preceding night, Jeanette was ſo exhauſted that

ſhe was ſcarce able to move. William was almoſt as much worn out; but he reſolved this night to watch by his friend's bed-ſide, and inſiſted that his wife ſhould return and enjoy the repoſe ſhe ſo much required in the adjoining room. One of the ſurgeons likewiſe remained with Frederick. As the patient, however, ſeemed to ſleep quietly, the ſurgeon fell aſleep alſo. William continued awake; and the remembrance of all his wonderful adventures furniſhed his mind with ſuch copious ſubject of meditation, as enabled him to reſiſt the attacks of ſleep.

A little after midnight he heard repeated knocks at the door; but as the room where the ſick man lodged was at the back of the houſe, and the knocking could not diſturb the repoſe of his friend, he took no farther notice of it. In a ſhort time, however, his attention was attracted by the noiſe increaſing, by the ſound of people paſſing and repaſſing,

and

and talking at a diſtance. Not long after, ſome one ſtepped up to the door of the room, and knocked ſoftly. William went out, and found the parſon with a light in his hand, who told him that a beautiful young lady with a caſket under her arm had come to his houſe on foot, and had called him up to ſpeak with him. As ſhe, however, ſpoke nothing but French, and he did not underſtand that language, he had conducted her to his cloſet, and taken the liberty to call him as an interpreter. The lady appeared very uneaſy, and was bathed in tears.

William haſtened to awake the ſurgeon, and followed the old man with a preſentiment which did not deceive him; for, when the door opened, Babet flew into his arms!—William's unexpected appearance gave her extreme joy a tincture of wildneſs. She now conſidered herſelf completely ſaved when ſhe found

herſelf again under the protection of a beloved friend. She laughed, wept, ſighed, prayed, and for a long time could not utter a coherent ſentence. At laſt ſhe enquired firſt for Jeanette—and then, with viſible emotion, for Frederick, whom, in the confuſion of the fight, ſhe had too well recogniſed when he dropped at her feet, and his laſt words, "Here will I die with pleaſure!" ſtill vibrated in her ears.

After William had given her a favourable anſwer to all her enquiries, and had ſomewhat ſettled her ſpirits by a compoſing draught, he expreſſed a wiſh to know by what lucky adventure ſhe had ſo unexpectedly appeared?—Babet, however, laid her finger on her mouth—ſhe remained ſilent—her eyes loſt their fire—and, after taking two or three turns through the room, ſhe ſeized William's hand, and entreated him never again to diſtreſs her with this queſtion.

William could not comprehend the cause of this refusal; but as she repeated her entreaty in the most fervent tone, and he was not accustomed to pry into other people's secrets, he desisted from all enquiry. The parson, too, could give no clue to the mystery. The servant could only tell that when Babet knocked, a carriage, surrounded by several men on horseback, stood at a little distance from the house; and that as soon as the door was opened, and she admitted, the carriage and the attendants wheeled round, and at full gallop took the way back to the wood.

Next morning the joy of the company was completed by the appearance of honest Peter, about whom, in the first alarm of the fight, nobody had shown any concern; and availing himself of this circumstance, he had fled with the baggage on his back into the thickest part of the wood. The whole day he

had wandered about the wood, and was almoſt ſtarved, till at laſt a good-natured peaſant brought him into the road. He then traced out his maſter, and arrived juſt at the moment when, on the removal of the ſecond dreſſing, the ſurgeon gave the moſt ſanguine hopes of Frederick's ſpeedy recovery, and Babet and Jeanette ſtood arm in arm by his bed-ſide.

CHAP. XXIV.

THE CONCLUSION.

FOR an author to confider all his readers to be perfons of the dulleft intellects, and therefore to leave them nothing to anticipate, or to fupply, would be no lefs abfurd and injudicious than it would be in the manager of a theatre, who, after dropping the curtain on the conclufion of a grand fcenic opera, fhould draw it up once more to exhibit to the fpectators the whole mechanifm of the metamorphofes, and fhow them every contrivance by which the various objects were reprefented.

The narrator of this furprifing but true hiftory is convinced that moft of his readers, particularly thofe of the fair fex, (whom, from his own experience, he

knows to possess a peculiar felicity of conjecture, in proof of which they are much quicker of comprehension than men) must long since have penetrated into the contents of the two last chapters, and anticipated the catastrophe. He thinks it only necessary, therefore, to mark the course which the history pursued, merely with dots, as geographers in maps use to point out the route of navigators, that the reader may follow them till he traces our heroes into the haven of Love, constant through every trial.

That Frederick, soon after his separation from his friend, was exchanged; that he returned to his regiment, which during the war had suffered very much, and which, partly to allow it a respite, and partly that it might be recruited to its full complement, was stationed in its old garrison; that the young hero, accustomed to activity, undertook the task of

of clearing the wood of the robbers by whom it was infested; are circumstances extremely natural, and unnecessary to be insisted upon.

William's elopement was the effect of, perhaps, too nice a feeling of honour, and his speedy return was the effect of a proper display of generosity in the enemy. When he arrived at the head-quarters of the general, who was encamped on the frontiers of Switzerland, he voluntarily surrendered himself as a prisoner of war, and, with the noble candour which testifies the innocent man, recounted the story of his flight. The commander in chief did not think it his duty again to expose the life of the prisoner to the fury of his countrymen, by detaining him. He joyfully seized the opportunity which his office of intendant of the exchange of prisoners presented, to rescue William from all farther

farther inconveniences, and that very evening he gave him liberty to return home.

What ufe William made of his free-dom it is eafy to conceive. He flew back to the place where he had left his faithful Jeanette, with the hope of ftill finding her there. When he found that fhe had got the ftart of him by twenty miles, he took poft-horfes, and followed her. Every moment the diftance by which they were feparated diminifhed. The laft ftage he reached an hour after her departure, and the timorous hoft told him how he had warned her not to proceed; and that in fpite of his friend-ly remonftrances, and Babet's fatigue, fhe had refolved to continue her jour-ney.

William trembled to think of the danger in which fhe was involved by her maternal anxiety. He haftened to the

the commandant of the place, an old fellow-soldier, and requested a strong escort to the next stage. Twenty hussars immediately received orders to attend him, and he set off full speed. The tumult in the wood reached his ear, and he arrived just in time to save his wife, and avenge his friend.

The thickest veil concealed the secret of Babet's adventure; and we should never have been able to penetrate it, if she had not some years after herself communicated the mystery in a moment of confidence to her husband. The captain of the robbers, who had called her name, seized and carried her off, was her brother Philip. In his youth spoiled by indulgence, perverted by the prejudices of birth, he left his country full of chimerical hopes, trusted to the distinction of his birth, and expected to perform an important part among the emigrants,

emigrants, for which he was not qualified. He thought himſelf neglected; he then joined himſelf with other diſcontented perſons in the ſame ſituation, and became a robber.

For ſome time he carried on his depredations cautiouſly, and with ſucceſs. But when his troop was increaſed by new acceſſions, he had the hardihood to engage in ſome extravagant attempts, which attracted the attention of government, and involved him in the moſt ſerious diſaſters. He was overpowered, his troop diſperſed, and he had the good fortune to avoid an ignominious death by making his eſcape to America.

When in the heat of the battle he recogniſed his ſiſter on her knees, a ſpark of fraternal affection awoke in his breaſt. He forgot his own danger, and thought only of carrying the helpleſs maid to a place of ſafety. After the ſkirmiſh was over,

over, and the reſt of his troop were aſſembled, he cauſed her caſket to be ſought for, returned it to her, and in perſon conducted her by circuitous paths, known to himſelf alone, to the parſon's houſe; here he preſented her his rugged hand, which ſhe bathed with tears of ſorrow to ſee him fallen ſo low. All her ſiſterly admonitions to divert him from his career of guilt—her affecting appeal to her honoured father's ſpirit—he heard only in ſullen ſilence.

With a heavy heart, and a determination at leaſt not to divulge her brother's ſhame, ſhe reſigned him to his fate, and haſtened back to the arms of friendſhip, in the boſom of a new family; where, in the perſon of her huſband, the orphan found a father, brother, and friend.

Love, friendſhip, virtue, hope, ſoon reſtored Frederick to perfect health. On

William's estate two families now grew and flourished. Harmony, content-ment, and cheerfulness beamed in the looks of their parents, and smiled in the eyes of their children. The two friends hung up their arms in the hall, tended their turnips and cabbages, and exclaim-ed with Voltaire:

> Ah! cachons nous! passons avec les sages
> Le soir serein d'un jour mêlé d'orages.

FINIS.